

# Cheshire East Local Development Framework

## Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Paper

October 2010



## Equal Opportunities and Access

### Equal Opportunities and Access

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# 1 Introduction

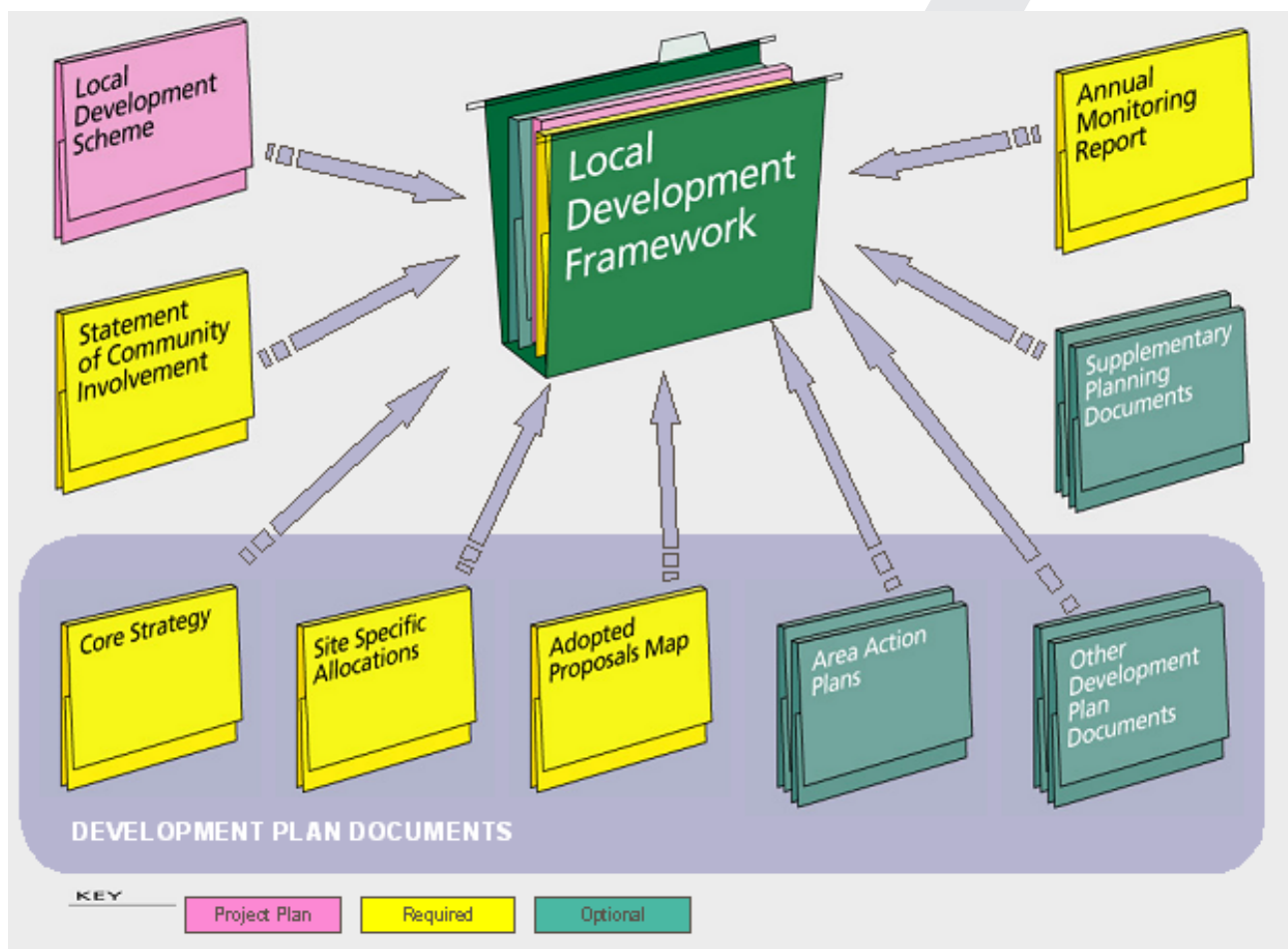
## 1 Introduction

### What is the Local Development Framework?

**1.1** Cheshire East is facing many challenges over the next twenty years or so including climate change, moving to a low carbon and globalised economy and increased housing need. These challenges will need to be faced in a period of a slow growing national economy and much reduced levels of infrastructure investment by the Government. It will therefore be important to have in place a clear plan, known as the Local Development Framework (LDF), to tackle these issues and to map out how we want our towns and villages to change and grow.

**1.2** Local Development Frameworks were introduced through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. The Local Development Framework is made up of a number of documents that combine to form the Spatial Development Plan within which planning decisions are made. The Core Strategy sets out the vision, strategic objectives and overall spatial strategy. The Site Allocations document identifies site allocations and sets out more detailed policies that will deliver the spatial strategy and which will be used in considering proposals for development. Supplementary Planning Documents will set out detailed guidance on the implementation of policies.

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**Figure 1.1 LDF Diagram**

**1.3** The objective of the new Local Development Framework system is to achieve sustainable development through a 'spatial planning' approach. Spatial Planning is about an integrated strategy for the future of an area that is supported by a clear vision, with commitment by all the relevant agencies to its delivery. Spatial Planning goes beyond the traditional view of planning as relating purely to the use of land and buildings and recognises the need to address a wider range of issues that affect our communities and the areas in which we live. The Core Strategy will integrate land use matters with other plans and strategies that deal with community issues such as health, community safety, housing, employment, community development, education, transport, the environment and regeneration.

**1.4** The Local Development Framework will, therefore, play a critical part in delivering Cheshire East Council's ambitious plans for the future of the Borough. It will set out where new homes will be built, where new employment should be located and how the physical and social infrastructure will be provided to support new development. It will play an important part in tackling issues surrounding climate change and in achieving sustainable development.

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**1.5** The Local Development Framework will do far more than this, however. It is also concerned with protecting and enhancing parts of the Borough that are important natural or heritage assets. It is about improving our town centres, protecting valued areas of open space and providing new recreation and leisure facilities. It also plays an important role of ensuring that the community's need for affordable housing is met.

**1.6** Through the Local Development Framework, critical decisions will have to be made that will seek to balance the need for future development to deliver economic prosperity and housing with the need to safeguard and enhance the environment. We need to ensure that Cheshire East is a well planned, attractive place to live in for future generations.

**1.7** The Local Development Framework will cover the Borough that lies outside the Peak National Park (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The Peak Park Local Development Framework will cover that part of Cheshire East within the National Park.

## What is the Core Strategy?

**1.8** The Core Strategy is the central part of the Local Development Framework setting out the strategic framework with which all the other Local Development Framework documents have to conform.

**1.9** The Core Strategy identifies the overarching objectives for spatial planning outcomes in Cheshire East. It will be used by everyone who want to see how Cheshire East will change or how new development will be planned for and managed over the next 15 years. It will deal with the strategic planning issues facing the Borough.

**1.10** The Core Strategy will therefore set out:

- The spatial vision and strategic objectives that provide a clear vision and direction for the future of the Borough and to steer the development of the strategy;
- A spatial strategy for the Borough as a whole and area strategies for main towns and sub areas, which are holistic and which identify the broad locations for development, protection and change;
- Core strategy policies for addressing how the vision and objectives can be achieved. These will set the scene for more detailed policies to be contained in the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document;
- Strategic Development Sites:
- An Infrastructure Plan; and
- A monitoring and implementation framework for delivery.

## Links to Other Strategies

**1.11** The Core Strategy is the spatial development plan for Cheshire East that will steer and be informed by other plans and strategies prepared by the Council and its partners and which will support their delivery.

## Sub Regional Strategy -Unleashing the Potential



# 1 Introduction

**1.12** At the sub-regional level under the auspices of the Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Commission, in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils, Cheshire East Council has signed up to an ambitious growth strategy for Cheshire and Warrington in the form of a strategy document entitled 'Unleashing the Potential'.

**1.13** The overall aim for the sub-region is to achieve "significant economic growth by accommodating significant increase in population, housing, jobs and GVA". The potential is identified to increase annual Gross Value Added for the sub-region by at least £10 billion to at least £30 billion by 2030, together with an increase in population by at least 100,000 and 22,000 additional jobs during the same period.

**1.14** In spatial terms, for Cheshire East the priorities are:

- 'Super-charged' growth for Crewe with the aim of significantly increasing its economic productivity - with an approximate 25% growth in jobs and population;
- To retain the focus on Macclesfield and north east Cheshire as the North West's most productive business and entrepreneurial area with targeted growth and collaboration with key employers; and
- To reinforce the role of market towns and larger villages as important components of economic growth and also in providing attractive residential locations for managers, professionals and knowledge workers. There is particular potential for economic and quality housing growth in the 'Weaver Towns' including Middlewich. The town of Congleton also is identified as having growth potential.

**1.15** In conjunction with and complementary to the development of the sub-regional strategy, Cheshire East Council has identified Crewe as its biggest spatial priority and has developed a 'Crewe Vision'. The Vision proposes to:

- Plan for significant growth in housing and jobs;
- Radically improve strategic transport links and create a state-of-the-art broadband internet network;
- Develop a more diversified 'knowledge economy' that attracts and keeps hi-tech firms and skilled workers;
- Enhance the attractiveness of Crewe as a place to live and work – including boosting schools and local transport;
- Develop key underutilised sites – including the Basford East investment site, Crewe rail station and the town centre; and
- Improve the town's public image and leadership.

**1.16** Cheshire East Council has undertaken a review of the plans and agreements in place for the redevelopment of Macclesfield Town Centre and to investigate the potential of the South Macclesfield Development Area, an area allocated for mixed-use development in the Macclesfield Local Plan but which has largely failed to be developed. It is expected that one outcome of this work will be a revised and deliverable proposal for a town centre regeneration scheme and for the South Macclesfield Development Area.



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**1.17** The Council is also developing a framework for its smaller towns that will build on and work with local partnerships to regenerate and revitalise these important service centres. It is critical to ensure that they grow and develop in the future and play a part in delivering the Borough's growth aspirations.

**1.18** The spatial outcomes of the Crewe Vision, Macclesfield Economic Masterplan and the smaller rural town initiatives will need to be reflected in the Core Strategy in order to facilitate their implementation.

## **Ambition for All - the Sustainable Community Strategy**

**1.19** The Local Development Framework will deliver the place shaping aspects and objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). It will also play a key role in delivering the Council's Corporate Objectives and other relevant strategies prepared by Cheshire East Council and its partners.

**1.20** 'Ambition for All' the Cheshire East Sustainable Community Strategy for the period 2010 to 2025 was approved on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2010. The purpose of the strategy is to set out how, over the next 15 years, the Partnership for Action for Cheshire East (PACE) will seek to ensure that Cheshire East continues to prosper. The activities outlined in the strategy are intended to improve the quality of life of all the people of Cheshire East and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through action to improve economic, social and environmental well-being across the area. The Strategy provides a high-level vision for Cheshire East centred around seven priorities for action which are:

- Nurturing strong communities, including the delivery of services as locally as possible and ensuring that communities feel safe;
- Creating conditions for Business Growth, including making the most of our tourism, heritage and natural assets and ensuring there is a good range of available employment sites and premises in all parts of Cheshire East with good transport links to attract new and expanding businesses;
- Unlocking the potential of our towns; this focuses firstly on the regeneration of Crewe including the redevelopment of the town centre and the provision of new homes and jobs, secondly on the revitalisation of Macclesfield including improving the quality and choice of shops and services in the town centre and progressing the development of South Macclesfield and thirdly on retaining the vitality and viability of our market towns to ensure that they continue to deliver essential services, retail, leisure and employment opportunities;
- Supporting our children and young people;
- Ensuring a sustainable future by providing affordable and appropriate housing to meet future needs, by promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, by ensuring that all major developments are located with good access to local amenities, cycle and walking routes, by developing a green infrastructure plan to safeguard, manage and enhance our green assets, giving priority to the redevelopment of our vacant brownfield sites and by recognising the importance of mineral extraction to the local economy;

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- Preparing for an increasingly older population including the provision of an adequate supply of suitable extra care housing; and
- Driving out the causes of poor health including investment in green infrastructure to encourage active and healthy lifestyle choices.

**1.21** The Council has prepared a Corporate Plan for the period 2010 to 2013. It defines a number of Corporate Objectives. These are:

- To give the people of Cheshire East more choice and control around services and resources;
- To grow and develop a sustainable Cheshire East;
- To improve life opportunities and health for everybody in Cheshire East;
- To enhance the Cheshire East environment; and
- To be an excellent Council and work with others to deliver for Cheshire East.

**1.22** Key, relevant actions to deliver those objectives include:

- Promote major regeneration of Macclesfield and Crewe;
- Maximise developer contributions to improve infrastructure, culture, leisure and green spaces;
- Meet targets in relation to the provision of affordable housing;
- Reduction in carbon emissions;
- Thriving and prosperous market towns; and
- Growth in the Cheshire East economy and the visitor economy.

**1.23** The Core Strategy and other Local Development Framework documents will also take into account, in due course, the Council's Local Transport Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Housing Strategy and Open Space Strategy, all of which are in the course of preparation.

## Purpose of this Document

**1.24** The creation of Cheshire East Council provides us with the opportunity to look afresh at how we want the towns and villages of the Borough to grow and flourish over the next twenty years or so.

**1.25** This document has, therefore, been prepared to encourage a full debate about the future spatial strategy for Cheshire East. It builds on the feedback that has been made during the consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy. This will be the first of several consultations; the next consultation will look at each of our communities and how they could contribute to the overall strategy.

**1.26** Firstly this document includes a spatial portrait of the Borough which provides a description of Cheshire East and the main towns. From this the key challenges that the Local Development Framework will need to address are identified.

# 1 Introduction

**1.27** The next section proposes a Spatial Vision for how we would envisage the Borough in 20 years time. Seven key spatial objectives are then proposed; these would steer the development of the strategy.

**1.28** Finally, the document sets out a range of alternative options for how those objectives might be achieved.

**1.29** At the Borough level, three options for the amount of housing and job growth that would be appropriate are set out. There are then three options for how growth would be distributed across the Borough.

**1.30** Option 1 proposes that a high proportion of development over the next 15 - 20 years would occur in the southern part of the Borough with the focus of development on delivering the Crewe Vision and maximising Crewe's role, not just as the sub-regional centre for south Cheshire, but also as the main driver of growth for the whole of Cheshire. There would also be growth in the Key Service Centres in the south of the Borough.

**1.31** Option 2 looks to reinforce the role of Crewe as the sub-regional centre for the south of the Borough and Macclesfield for the north. The Key Service Centres in the southern part of the Borough (Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Nantwich and Sandbach) would also be the focus for growth, albeit at a lower level than in Option 1.

**1.32** Option 3 would focus development in the principal towns and Key and Local Service Centres in locations that have a good standard of accessibility that will enable people to travel to work, shops and services by means other than the private car i.e. public transport, cycling and walking. The following towns would be the focus of most development:

- Crewe, Alsager, Congleton, Nantwich and Sandbach;
- Macclesfield, Alderley Edge, Handforth, Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow

## What are your views?

**1.33** This Issues and Options paper marks the first stage in the process of preparing the Cheshire East 'Core Strategy'. This is your chance to help us decide which is the best way to manage the growth of the Borough over the next 15-20 years.

**1.34** We want to know what you think. Do you agree with the vision? Have we understood the challenges? Which Option will provide the best strategy for the future of the Borough? Are there other factors which we should take into account?

## How can I get involved?

**1.35** Your comments will help us shape the final Core Strategy document. The policies and proposals in the final document will affect everyone that lives, works or visits Cheshire East - this is your opportunity to get involved and have your say on shaping the future of your district.

# 1 Introduction

**1.36** The consultation is based upon a series of specific questions that seek your views on the policy options. For ease of reference, the consultation questions are numbered consecutively and presented as a yellow box at the appropriate place in the document.

**1.37** You can read this document in libraries, Customer Service Centres and on our website. You may also request a hard copy (for which we have to make a charge to cover our printing and postage costs) or a copy on CD by contacting us by telephone or email. For up to the minute information about what's going on where and when, please visit our website.

**1.38** We would prefer you to tell us what you think using the on-line interactive document. However, you can also download a copy of the questionnaire which can then be filled in and sent to us. This will also be available on the CD or on request from us.

**1.39** The consultation period runs from ----- until the ----- .

**1.40** Our contact details are:

Address: Spatial Planning, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 1HZ

Telephone: 01270 685893

Email: [ldf@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

Website: [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**1.41** A Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulations Assessment report have been published to accompany the Issues and Options consultation . These documents provide further background information to this consultation document but do not form part of the consultation itself.

## What Happens Next?

**1.42** There will be many further opportunities for people to have their say as we move through the process of writing our Core Strategy.

**1.43** Following this Issues and Options consultation, we will consider the responses and start to work on a draft Core Strategy taking on board the comments we have received and any new evidence that has emerged. The draft Core Strategy is due to be published for consultation in -----.

## Sustainability Appraisal

**1.44** A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will test how the objectives and options will contribute to the development of sustainable communities. The parallel Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment

# 1 Introduction

processes are taking place in tandem with the production of the Core Strategy and should inform key stages of the process. A Scoping Report was published in June 2009 and an appraisal of the issues and options accompanies this document.

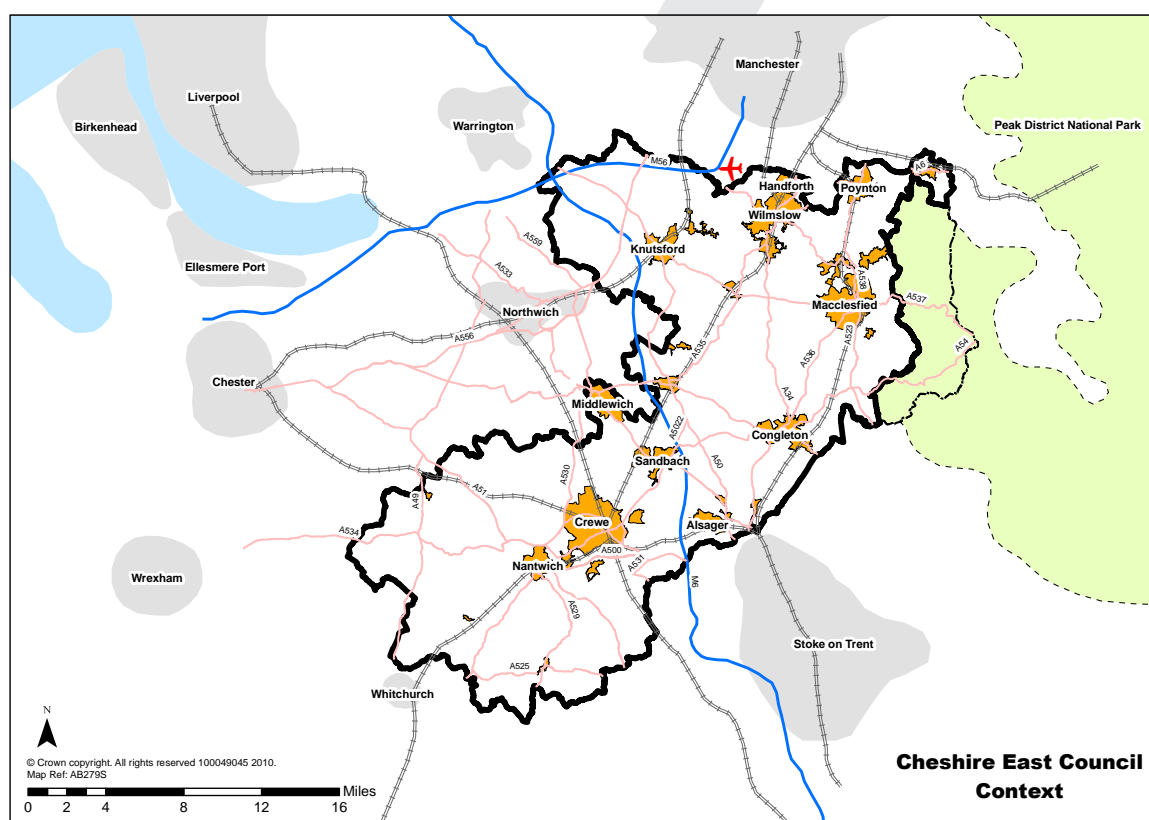
## Habitats Regulations Assessment

**1.45** A Habitats Regulations Assessment is required under the European Habitats Directive, to ensure the Core Strategy will not have an adverse impact on sites designated as being of European importance in terms of nature conservation and / or geological interest. Both the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment will be published for consultation alongside this Issues and Options Report.

## 2 Spatial Portrait

### The Borough

**2.1** The Borough of Cheshire East is bounded by Cheshire West and Chester to the west, Warrington and the Manchester conurbation to the north, Shropshire and the North Staffordshire conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme to the south and the Peak District National Park to the east.



**Figure 2.1 Cheshire East Location Map**

**2.2** Much of the northern part of the Borough and a smaller area to the east lie within the Green Belt. Green Belt is intended to prevent urban sprawl, protect the countryside and assist in the regeneration of urban areas. Cheshire East has 40,630 hectares of land designated as Green Belt.

**2.3** Cheshire East contains the two principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield and a number of market towns including Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

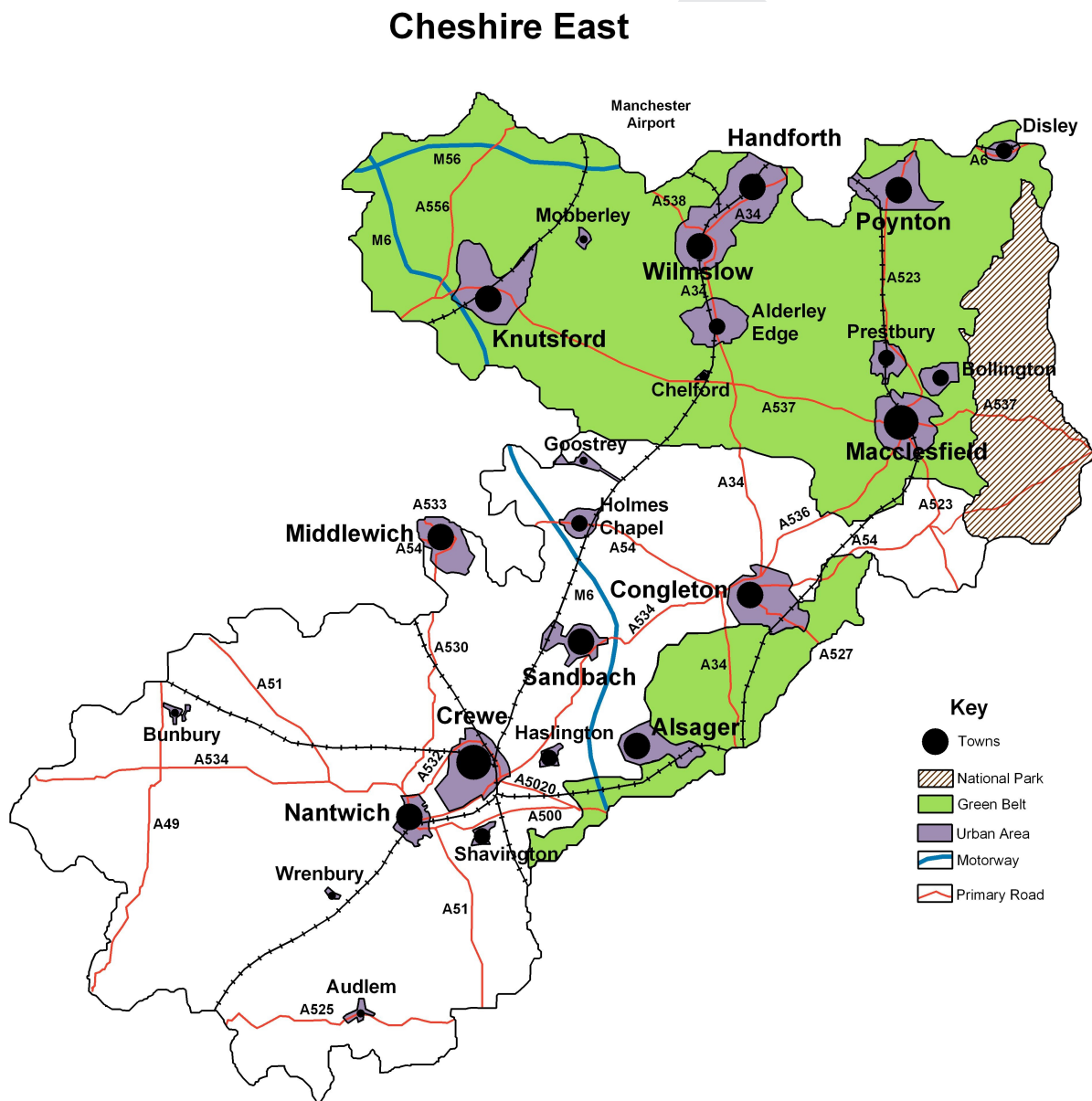
**2.4** The extensive road network in the Borough includes the M6, which runs north-south through the centre of the Borough and the M56 running east-west. The M56 links to the M6 in the north of the Borough. There are also fourteen primary 'A' roads in Cheshire East.



## 2 Spatial Portrait

**2.5** The rail network is accessible from 22 railway stations across the Borough. These railway stations are located on one or more of the rail-lines radiating from Crewe. These are the West Coast Main Line to Glasgow and London, the Stoke-on-Trent/ Nottingham Line, the Shrewsbury/South Wales Line, the Chester/Holyhead Line, and the Greater Manchester line. Macclesfield is on the West Coast Main Line (Stoke-on-Trent route) giving access to Greater Manchester and London Euston.

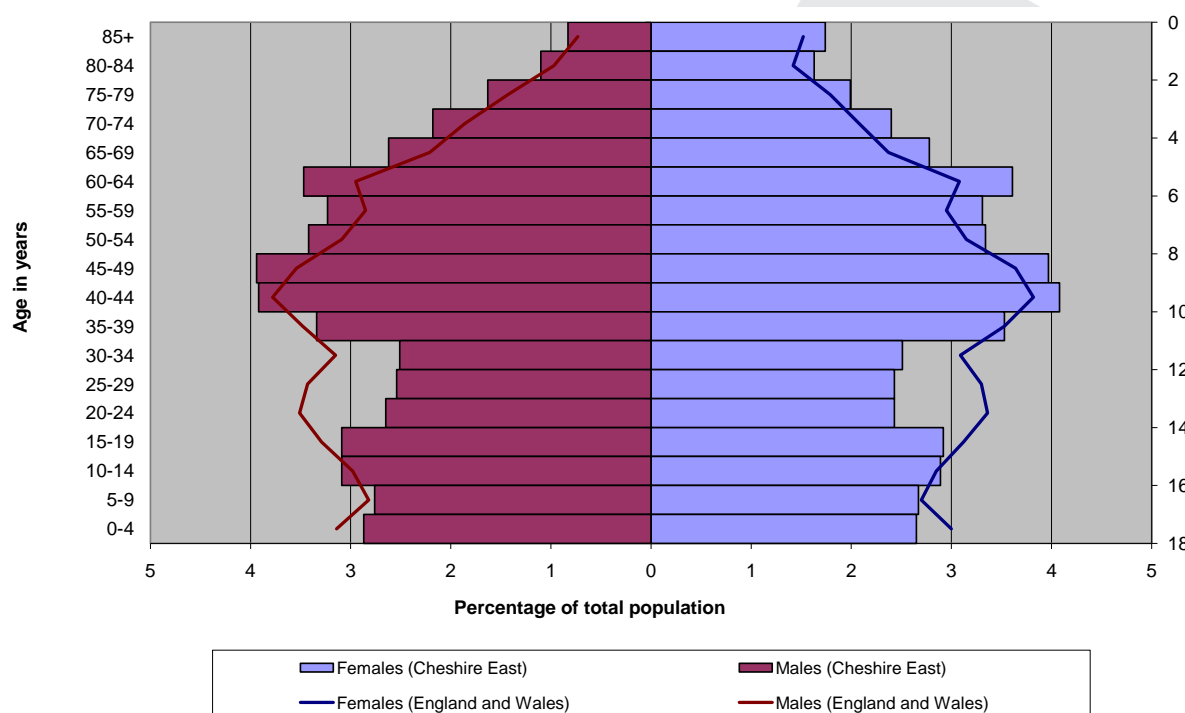
**2.6** The map below indicates the distribution of key features within Cheshire East.



**Figure 2.2 Map of Cheshire East**

## 2 Spatial Portrait

**2.7** Cheshire East has a population of 362,700; 50.9% (184,500) are female and 49.1% (178,200) are male. <sup>(1)</sup> This is equivalent to 0.66% of the population of England and Wales. The population pyramid below highlights the age distribution of Cheshire East.



**Figure 2.3 Cheshire East Population Pyramid (2009)**

**2.8** As illustrated in Figure 2.3 Cheshire East has a lower than England and Wales average proportion of both male and females in the following age groups (15-19, 20-24, 25-29 and 30-34). Cheshire East has a higher than the England and Wales average proportion of residents over the age of 40. The relative shortage of people of working age and predominance of older people has implications for the housing needs of the population and for the future economic prosperity of the Borough.

**2.9** Using 2007 population data as a base it is expected that the total Cheshire East population will increase by 22,900 up to 2027 leading to an overall population figure of 383,60. <sup>(2)</sup>

**2.10** According to the Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), house prices across Cheshire East and its former districts have increased dramatically over the period 1996 to 2009, from around £55,500 as a median figure to a peak of £186,000 in 2007. This represents an increase of 234% in median house prices over a 13 year period. House prices in the former Macclesfield area were highest, Crewe and Nantwich the lowest and prices in Congleton have tended to mirror the Cheshire East average (median) house price.

1 ONS Mid-Year Estimate, 2009

2 Cheshire East Population Forecast September 2009

## 2 Spatial Portrait

**2.11** According to the Communities and Local Government website (2009), Cheshire East has an income to house price ratio of 6.7. In terms of relative affordability the Borough is ranked the 8th least affordable District in the North West. <sup>(3)</sup>

**2.12** Information from the 2001 census shows that within Cheshire East there were 147,144 households with an average household size of 2.36 people. Housing need is expected to increase as a result of national trends, including predicted increases in population and changes to family sizes/dynamics resulting from the increased number of divorces and separations (6% of the residents of Cheshire East were divorced in 2001).

**2.13** The economy of Cheshire East is diverse and generally vibrant. The Borough provides 6.9% of the economic output in the North West and 7.4% of its businesses; the highest share of any NW authority area. Its residents make up a significant proportion of the 'knowledge economy' workforce that drives the adjacent city regions, especially Manchester. Cheshire East performs better than the regional and national averages in skill levels, business start ups and knowledge based employment.

**2.14** The average household income in Cheshire East is £38,100 per year, however there is significant disparity of wages across the Borough. Lower income areas are predominantly located within the major towns of Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Nantwich, whilst the majority of the high income areas are the smaller towns and rural areas of the Borough (with the highest average earners located in the north of the Borough). This is indicated in Figure 2.4 below.

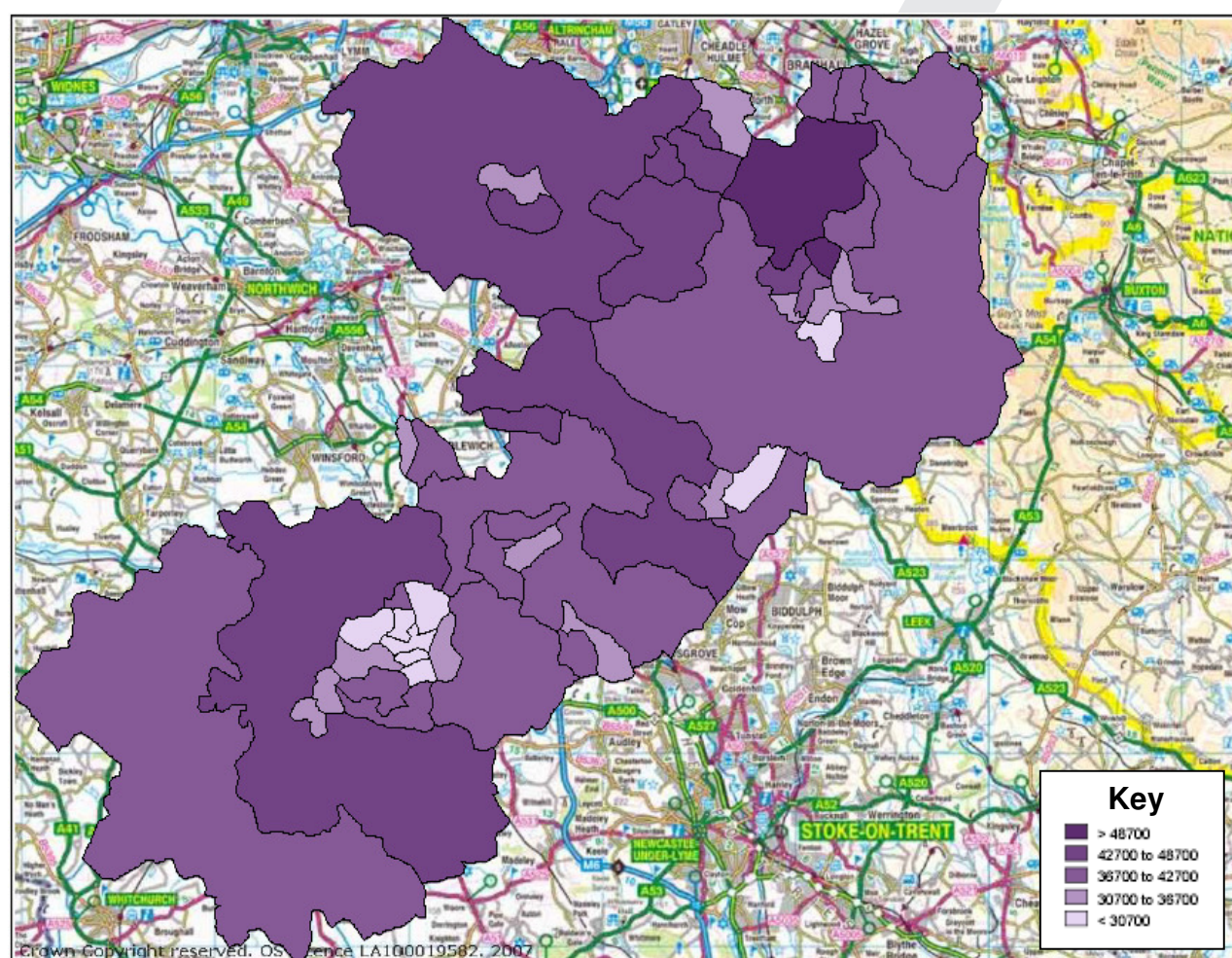
**2.15** The number of people employed in the pharmaceutical industry is significantly above the national average with particular concentrations in the former Macclesfield District (e.g. Astra Zeneca). Advanced engineering is a significant employer in the Crewe area (e.g. Bentley Motors and Bombardier). Both Macclesfield and Crewe are net importers of labour whereas in the Congleton area there is a relative shortage of jobs and a large outflow of jobs. The rural nature of the Borough is reflected in the relatively high number of people employed in agriculture, twice the national average. There are significant numbers of residents, particularly in the north of the Borough, who commute to Greater Manchester to work.

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3 CLG House Price Statistics; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2009.



## 2 Spatial Portrait



**Figure 2.4 Average Weekly Household Income in Cheshire East**

**2.16** In 2008, 166,100 people were employed within Cheshire East. 70% of these were in full time positions and 30% were working part time. Out of those, the majority were employed within the banking, finance and insurance sector (24.9%), 13.5% within the manufacturing sector, 21.9% in public administration, education and health and 24.4% in the distribution and hospitality sector.

**2.17** The Borough has major educational assets in terms of skills development and knowledge transfer, in the form of Manchester Metropolitan University at Crewe and three Further Education colleges (South Cheshire, Reaseheath and Macclesfield). The proximity of Manchester International Airport also provides economic benefits to the Borough in terms of access to national and international markets as well as providing a substantial number of jobs.

**2.18** Cheshire East has a diverse retail offer, ranging from the traditional town centres to out of centre retail parks including Handforth Dean (Handforth), Grand Junction (Crewe) and Barn Road (Congleton). However many of the Borough's town centres are under performing, in need of revitalisation and suffering from competition from major centres outside the Borough. With the exception of Nantwich and Knutsford, our town centres are insufficiently attractive to bring in visitors from outside the Borough. There is scope therefore to improve the

## 2 Spatial Portrait

attractiveness and vitality of our town centres. Unfortunately the economic recession has led to uncertainty in the delivery of major town centre redevelopment schemes in Crewe and Macclesfield.

**2.19** The visitor economy is an important contributor to the Cheshire East economy with about 10,000 jobs associated with the tourism industry and with a turnover of £653 million. Major attractions include Tatton Park, Jodrell Bank, Styal Mill and the Peak District National Park.

**2.20** Over an 8 year period from July 2000 until June 2008, a total of 101,130 people moved into Cheshire East (with particular links to Stockport, Manchester, Trafford and London) and 88,090 people have moved out of the Borough (with particular links to Staffordshire, the South West and North Wales). The result is a net in-flow of 13,040 people (around 1,630 each year)<sup>(4)</sup>

**2.21** Based on data taken from the 2009 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Household Survey, 66% of its 189,771 economically active residents lived and worked in Cheshire East and 34% lived in Cheshire East but worked outside the Borough.

**2.22** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that, on the basis of migration and travel to work data, Cheshire East comprises three housing market areas; one focused on the former Macclesfield District, which exhibits strong interactions with the South Manchester market; a second focused on the former Crewe and Nantwich district, which is largely self-contained; the third is centred around Congleton, which has noticeable market interactions with North Staffordshire and South Manchester.

**2.23** Within Cheshire East, statistics indicate that residents have a higher than average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions level, averaging 10.3 tonnes per person more than either the regional or national average of 8.4 tonnes per person. This has implications for local, regional and national air quality.<sup>(5)</sup>

**2.24** Cheshire East's landscape is dominated by the flat topography of the Cheshire plains; however variety is provided as a result of the proximity of the Peak District to the east and the Mid Cheshire Ridge to the west. There is also a diverse and valued range of flora and fauna in the Borough.

**2.25** The most prominent environmental designations within Cheshire East are:

- **416 Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs)** - Locally valued sites of biological diversity;
- **33 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)** - Nationally important sites, designated as they are felt to represent the very best wildlife and geological sites in the Country;
- **2 National Nature Reserves** - Nationally important sites established to protect the most important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations in Britain;
- **1 Special Protection Area (SPA)** - Designated as a result of its importance as a habitat for rare and vulnerable birds and is of international importance;

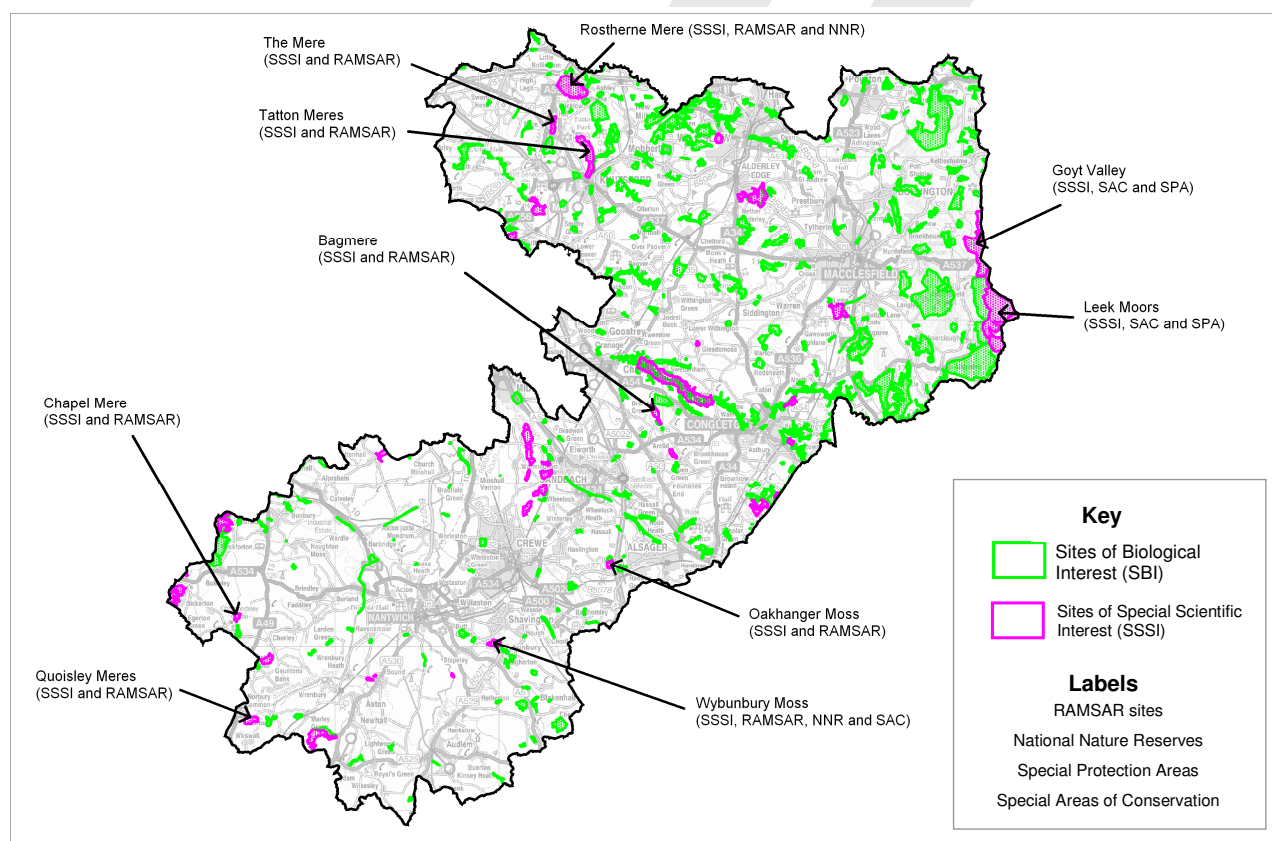
4 ONS Migration Flow Data via NHSCR

5 Source Cheshire East Climate Change Unit

## 2 Spatial Portrait

- **2 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** - Designated due to their potential to contribute towards the conservation of 189 habitat types and 788 species identified at most in need of conservation at a European level (excluding birds). These sites are of international importance;
- **2 Ramsar** designations (spread across 9 sites) - Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention; and
- **National Park** designation placed on the Peak District National Park - Designated because of its outstanding value in terms of natural beauty, ecological, archaeological, geological and recreational value.

**2.26** The distribution of these key environmental designations is indicated below:



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NORTH

**Figure 2.5 Environmentally Designated Sites in Cheshire East**

**2.27** Cheshire East contains a valued, varied and unique heritage which includes a number of cultural and environmental assets. These assets include Macclesfield's industrial heritage, Little Moreton Hall, Crewe's railway heritage, Tatton Park, Lyme Park, Styal Mill, Tegg's Nose, the canal network, historic towns and parts of the Peak District National Park amongst others. Other unique attractions include a wealth of Historic Parks and Gardens and unique events and attractions such as Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope.

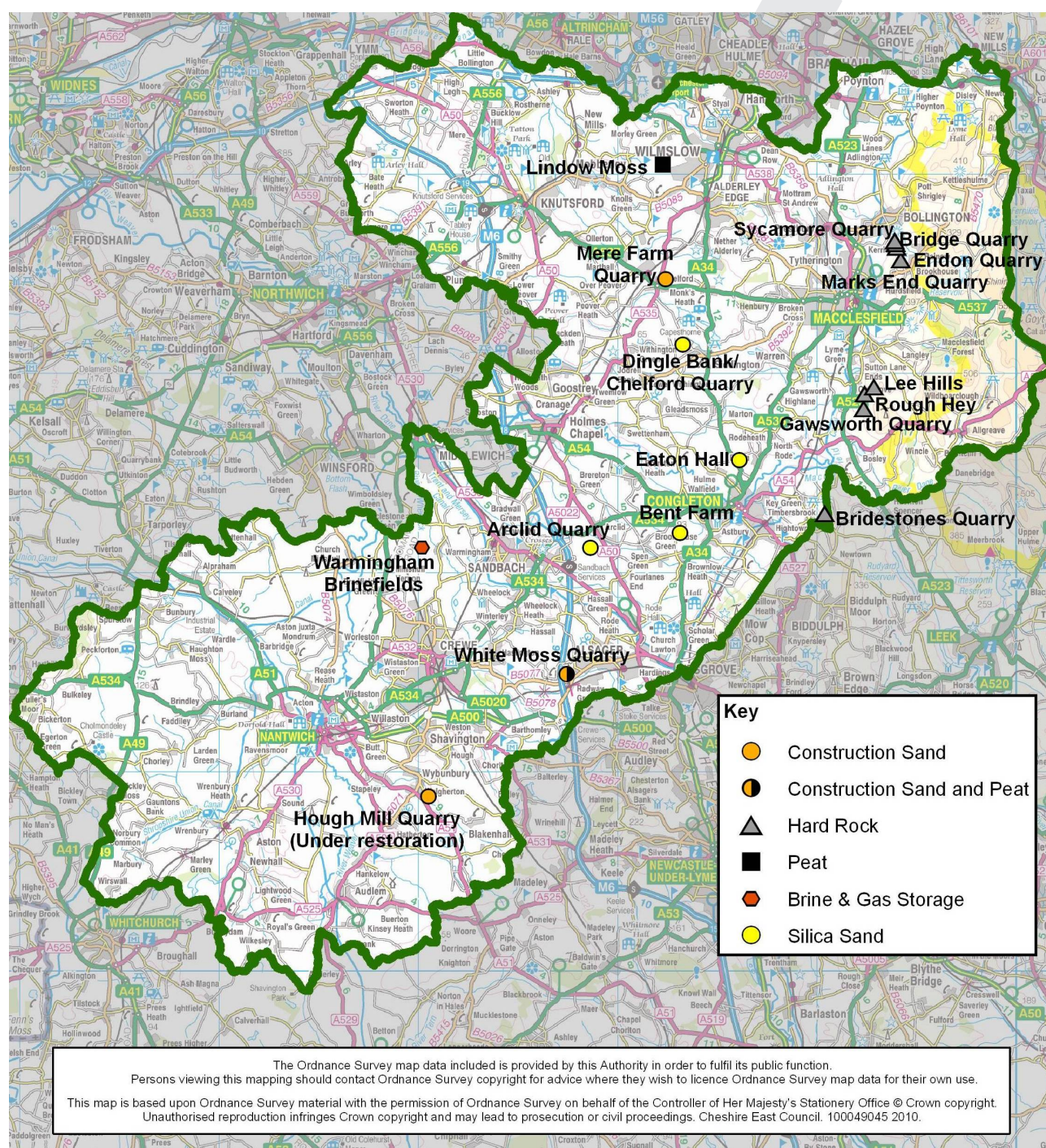
**2.28** Formal cultural designations present within Cheshire East include:



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- **76 Conservation Areas** of varying size and scale - Designated as a result of the special character of development that has taken place within them. Within and adjoining these areas there is a statutory duty to pay 'special attention' to development with the intention of preserving/enhancing its character or appearance;
- **Listed buildings** - Those of particular merit, for reason of architectural quality, their social or economic history, association with well known characters or events or because of their group value with other listed buildings. There are 2,637 listings covering a number of different gradings;
- **108 Scheduled Monuments (SM)** - Historically important sites and monuments;
- **17 registered Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest** - Viewed as a distinctive and much cherished part of our inheritance;
- **10 areas of archaeological potential** - Parts of the country where it is deemed likely that buried archaeology has survived; and
- **1 registered battlefield** - Designated as a result of the importance of events that took place there.

## 2 Spatial Portrait



### Figure 2.6 Minerals Sites in Cheshire East

**2.29** The main mineral types extracted in Cheshire East are silica sand, construction sand and gravel, crushed/hard rock (sandstone), salt (brine) and peat. There are currently 17 permitted minerals sites situated across the Borough.



## 2 Spatial Portrait

**2.30** Cheshire East contains key resources of high quality silica sands which are extracted at four sites. The principle use of silica (or industrial) sand is as a raw material in a range of industrial processes; notably glass manufacture and foundry casting. Construction sand and gravel along with hard/crushed rock is extracted primarily for use as aggregate materials in building.

**2.31** The Borough also contains significant resources of underground salt that is extracted in the form of brine in an area around Warmingham. Following extraction, specifically created underground cavities are used for the storage of natural gas. In addition, peat resources are extracted at two sites although production is small in scale.

### Crewe

**2.32** Crewe is the largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of about 70,000. It grew up as a railway town in the nineteenth century; but now it is a major employment centre with a diversified base in education, manufacturing, services and distribution. The major employers are Bentley Motors, Leighton Hospital and Manchester Metropolitan University. Crewe is the primary shopping centre in the south of the Borough although the town centre is in need of major investment; there are plans for a major private sector led redevelopment in the town centre which will increase its attractiveness. The town is also noted for the award winning Crewe Business Park, regarded as the country's first 'green business park'.

**2.33** Crewe is often referred to as the "Gateway to the North West". It remains a major railway interchange on the West Coast Main Line. The town is also well served by bus routes. Two large areas of land to the south of the town at Basford have been identified in the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan as strategically important employment sites, which will provide jobs for the people of south Cheshire and north Staffordshire. This will help to redress Crewe's problems with economic inactivity, which is higher than the Borough average, in addition local residents have the lowest average income. Parts of the west end of Crewe are particularly disadvantaged; an area where life expectancy is 20 years less than the more affluent areas of Cheshire East.

**2.34** There is currently planning permission for the construction of an additional 905 dwellings in the town, although about 200 of these are dependent on legal agreements being signed.

**2.35** The Council has commissioned work (Crewe Vision) to advise in unlocking the economic potential of the town. This includes developing the knowledge economy and broadband access, and utilising the potential of the Basford sites, Crewe Railway Station and the town centre. The regeneration proposed is likely to see the population increase by some 25%. There is a recognition that there will be a need for major transport improvements to be made to serve new housing and employment development in Crewe, including the completion of the Crewe Green Link Road and dualling of the A500 to Junction 16 of the M6 Motorway.

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### Macclesfield

**2.36** Macclesfield is the second largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of about 51,000. It is situated in the north eastern part of the borough on the River Bollin. It is close to the county borders of Greater Manchester to the north, and the Derbyshire Peak District to the east.

**2.37** The town is most famous for its once thriving silk industry. Present day industries include: pharmaceuticals, textiles, light engineering, paper and plastics. One of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies Astra Zeneca is located at nearby Alderley Park. In addition many residents work in Greater Manchester.

**2.38** Macclesfield has the largest shopping centre in the Borough with over 500 shops. There is a need however for new investment into the town centre to improve its retail offer, to improve the public realm and to boost the night time economy. There are plans for major new retail development in the town which will further improve its attractiveness. Although the northern part of Cheshire East is very prosperous, Macclesfield does have its problems; some of the areas in the town show evidence of multiple deprivation.

**2.39** The town is well served by bus routes and the railway station is on the West Coast Main Line with direct regular services to Stoke-on-Trent, Manchester and London Euston.

**2.40** There is currently planning permission for the construction of an additional 872 dwellings in the town, although 54 are dependent on legal agreements being signed.

**2.41** Cheshire East Council is preparing an Economic Masterplan to revitalise Macclesfield. This will consider the future role of the town and determine how the South Macclesfield Development Area can be brought forward.

### Alsager

**2.42** Alsager is a small town in the south east of the Borough with a population of 12,460. It lies east of Crewe and is bounded by the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation to the south. It was a small farming village until the 19th century when due to its rail connections and rural character, it became popular with managers from the nearby Potteries. During the Second World War, a large armaments factory was built outside the town at Radway Green, and the town grew to house the influx of factory workers. This site remains the town's largest employer.

**2.43** More recently the town was noted for the presence of the Alsager campus of the Manchester Metropolitan University; but in 2006 the process began of transferring staff and departments to the Crewe Campus. The whole of the site is due to close by 2011 although some of the sports facilities may remain in situ.

**2.44** Alsager town centre stretches along the main street. The town centre is focused around the crossroads of the B5077 (Crewe Road / Lawton Road) and the B5078 (Sandbach Road North / Sandbach Road South) and comprises approximately 102 retail units. Within this area two Principal Shopping Areas are defined in the Congleton Borough Local Plan;

## 2 Spatial Portrait

one to the east along Lawton Road and one to the west on Crewe Road. In addition, the town centre includes Milton Park, a large area of public open space that has recently been remodelled.

**2.45** The number of jobs available within the area is low, although the unemployment rate is lower than the Cheshire East average. Income levels are also generally below the Cheshire East average. Two of the major employers in the town, Manchester Metropolitan University and Twyfords, are in the process of closing their sites.

**2.46** The town is served by several bus routes that provide access to Crewe, Hanley, Sandbach, Kidsgrove and Nantwich. The railway station, which is a short walk from the town centre, provides links to Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Lichfield and on to Northampton, Milton Keynes and London Euston.

**2.47** There are currently planning permissions in place for the construction of an additional 167 dwellings in the town.

**2.48** In respect of constraints to development, the town is bounded to the south and east by Green Belt and there is also an area to the south included in a flood risk zone.

### Congleton

**2.49** Congleton is a large market town with a population of 26,580. It lies on the River Dane in the east of the borough. In its early days it was an important centre of textile production, especially lace and leather gloves. Today the principal industries in Congleton include the manufacture of airbags. There are light engineering factories and sand extraction occurs on the Cheshire Plain, although much of the area is now a dormitory for Manchester, Macclesfield and Stoke-on-Trent.

**2.50** Congleton has a reasonably vibrant town centre with 241 retail units, however vacancy rates are currently high. Planning permission has recently been granted for a retail development in the town centre that will increase the town's attractiveness. The development will take the form of an extension to the Bridgestones Centre through to Mill Street providing a new home for the town's market.

**2.51** The town is served by several bus routes and has its own railway station with direct services between Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester. The M6 is a short distance away.

**2.52** There is currently planning permission for the construction of an additional 325 dwellings in the town.

**2.53** Constraints to development include Green Belt to the south and east, and to the north east the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescopes Consultation Zone.

### Handforth

**2.54** Handforth is a suburban area on the northern edge of Cheshire East with a population of 6,150. In the 1950's, two Manchester overspill housing estates were built in the area to rehouse people from Victorian slums of inner city Manchester.

## 2 Spatial Portrait

**2.55** The town has a small shopping centre containing 46 retail units. The Handforth Dean Retail Park contains a number of large format retailers.

**2.56** The town has an economic activity rate lower than that of Cheshire East. One in three residents are economically inactive. Average household income levels are the second lowest in Cheshire East.

**2.57** A large proportion of jobs in Handforth are located at the Stanley Green industrial estate and the Retail Park. There is a high level of in-commuting, particularly from Stockport.

**2.58** There is no direct road access between the settlement of Handforth and Stanley Green / Handforth Dean. Access to the industrial estate and Retail Park is only available from the A34 bypass. Once constructed, the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road will provide quick road access to the airport, approximately 4 km to the north-west.

**2.59** Handforth has its own railway station with two trains per hour serving Crewe and Manchester. Regular buses serve Macclesfield, Manchester, Stockport and Wilmslow.

**2.60** There is currently planning permission for just one additional dwelling in the town.

**2.61** Handforth is bounded by Green Belt and there are areas of flood risk surrounding the River Dean and other local watercourses.

### Knutsford

**2.62** Knutsford is a dormitory town with a population of 12,570 people. It lies in the north east of the borough some 19 km to the south west of Manchester and 18 km north west of Macclesfield. After the Second World War overspill housing estates were created in the town to accommodate families from Manchester. This area has localised pockets of deprivation. Tatton Park borders the town to the north.

**2.63** Within the town centre, there are 205 retail units, making it the sixth largest shopping centre in the Borough. It contains many buildings of architectural or historic importance.

**2.64** There are reasonable daytime bus services linking Knutsford with Altrincham, Macclesfield, Northwich and Wilmslow. The railway station is centrally located and has one train per hour to Chester, Manchester, Northwich and Stockport. There is significant out-commuting to Manchester and Stockport.

**2.65** There is currently planning permission for an additional 82 dwellings within the town.

**2.66** There are constraints to development with Knutsford tightly bounded by Green Belt. The grounds of Tatton Park extend virtually into the town centre, and there is an area of flood risk to the east of the town.



## 2 Spatial Portrait

### Middlewich

**2.67** Middlewich is a market town with a population of 13,390. It dates back to Roman times when it was important for the production of salt. Salt is still manufactured at British Salt, which employs around 125 people. The close proximity to the M6 motorway has led to the creation of a large distribution and business park at Midpoint 18.

**2.68** The town centre has 95 retail units and is centred on Wheelock Street where planning permission has been granted for a new supermarket. In recent years tourism has become increasingly important, with the annual Folk and Boat Festival being a notable attraction. The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through the town and is an important tourism and recreational resource.

**2.69** Although there is a railway line that runs through the town, it is currently used solely for freight movements. There is no railway station or passenger rail service within the town, but there are bus services providing access to Crewe, Holmes Chapel Congleton, Northwich, Sandbach and Winsford. The M6 is a short distance away linked to the town by the A54. An Eastern Bypass for Middlewich has been partially constructed in recent years. The construction of the final section linking to the A533 Booth Lane to the south of the town will open up further land for employment development as well as improving environmental conditions in the town centre. The timing of this project, being largely dependent upon private sector funding, is currently uncertain.

**2.70** There is currently planning permission for the construction of an additional 104 dwellings in the town.

**2.71** Constraints on development include the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescopes Consultation Zone. There is an area of archaeological potential that covers part of the north eastern area of the town.

### Nantwich

**2.72** Nantwich is a thriving service centre with a population of 17,180. It dates back to Roman times, when it was a centre for the production of salt. Nantwich has a thriving town centre with 286, mainly independent, units. The town itself contains more than 100 listed buildings, and has the largest collection of historic buildings in the Borough. It is also a popular destination for tourists and visitors from its large rural hinterland.

**2.73** Nantwich railway station lies on the line from Crewe to Cardiff via Shrewsbury. Bus services are relatively good with regular services to residential areas of the town and to Crewe.

**2.74** There is planning permission for the construction of an additional 383 dwellings in the town, although 256 of these are dependent on legal agreements being signed.

**2.75** In respect of planning constraints, the River Weaver floodplain runs through the town.

## 2 Spatial Portrait

### Poynton

**2.76** Poynton is a dormitory town (population 13,190) in the north eastern corner of the borough, (11 km) north of Macclesfield, (8 km) south of Stockport. It was once an important coal mining area.

**2.77** The shopping centre has 115 retail units. A programme of environmental improvements is currently planned for the town centre.

**2.78** Two buses per hour serve the town, providing links to Bollington, Stockport and Macclesfield. The railway station is on the western side of the town and has one train per hour serving stations between Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent.

**2.79** There is currently planning permission for the construction of 74 additional dwellings in Poynton.

**2.80** The settlement is tightly bounded by Green Belt and development land within the town is very limited. There are some small areas at risk of flooding adjoining Poynton Brook.

### Sandbach

**2.81** Sandbach is a market town with a population of 17,880. Its origins date back to Saxon times. It is widely famed for its weekly Thursday market and the ancient Saxon Crosses. It contains a number of areas and features of historical and architectural value as well as encompassing several significant areas of local environmental importance. Although important for its former truck manufacturing industries, there have been significant changes in its employment base recently with significant losses of manufacturing jobs.

**2.82** The town centre has 144 retail units. The town is now the headquarters of Cheshire East Council, which is the largest employer.

**2.83** There is a railway station on the edge of the town providing services to Crewe Manchester and Manchester Airport. There is also a reasonable bus service, with routes providing access to Congleton, Crewe, Northwich and Macclesfield. The town lies adjacent to junction 17 of the M6.

**2.84** There is currently planning permission for the construction of 876 additional dwellings.

**2.85** Planning constraints relate to areas around the town being at risk of flooding.

### Wilmslow

**2.86** Wilmslow, population 22,530, lies in the north of the Borough. The town is noted for its high quality housing and shopping, making it a sought after location.

**2.87** The town centre has 234 retail units. The town is also served by the out-of-town Handforth Dean Retail Park which includes major stores for Tesco and Marks and Spencer. The town has a strong office sector both within the town centre and also on a number of

## 2 Spatial Portrait

large out-of-town office parks. 43.4% of the local jobs are in financial services. A large number of residents work in Manchester, with other significant commuter flows to Stockport and Macclesfield. The nearby Manchester International Airport is also a major employer.

**2.88** The town has easy road access to the M60 and M56. Manchester Airport is 5 km to the north. Access will be improved when the western section of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road is completed.

**2.89** Wilmslow has a reasonable local bus network serving destinations including Knutsford, Macclesfield, Manchester Airport, Manchester and Stockport. The railway station is on the West Coast Main Line served by local and long-distance services.

**2.90** There is currently planning permission for the construction of almost 500 additional dwellings in the town.

**2.91** There are constraints to development. The town is tightly bounded by Green Belt and there are areas of flood risk surrounding the River Bollin, the River Dean and Whitehall Brook.

### 3 Key Challenges

**3.1** The Core Strategy needs to provide a clear vision and strategy to guide the growth of Cheshire East over the next 15-20 years. This strategy must help to deliver the ambitions of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Core Strategy will also need to address cross cutting issues of national importance such as tackling climate change and delivering sustainable communities.

### Sustainable Development

**3.2** Cheshire East Council has to contribute to tackling the issue of climate change through developing appropriate strategies through the Local Development Framework. Greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), are the main cause of climate change. In the UK, three quarters of our current energy supply comes from burning fossil fuels; a process that is a huge emitter of CO<sub>2</sub>. In addition to this, road transport in the UK is responsible for 21% of the total UK greenhouse gas emissions.

**3.3** In response to this, the UK currently has a legally binding EU target to produce 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020, up from about 2.25% in 2008. In addition to this, through the Climate Change Act 2008, the UK has a statutory duty to reduce its carbon emissions as a whole by 2050, to levels 80% lower than a 1990 baseline.

**3.4** The Core Strategy will incorporate policies relating to climate change such as:

- Create sustainable urban and rural communities that locate development in places that are close to jobs, services, and have good links to public transport, so reducing the need to travel, especially by private car;
- Provide opportunities to travel through the Borough by means other than the private car;
- Utilising our landscape, for example green infrastructure for urban cooling and functional flood plains, as well as the identification of carbon sinks that absorb and store emissions;
- Safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management;
- Reducing flood risk to and from new development through location, layout and design, and through the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (suds);
- Conserving water through the careful design of new developments;
- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity throughout the Borough from the threat of climate change;
- Ensure new development meets a high standard of energy efficiency, so reducing carbon emissions and using the siting and layout of the development to maximise solar gain and natural light, for example; and
- Incorporate low and zero carbon energy requirements into new developments, through decentralised energy supply, as well as through the use of combined/district heating networks.

**3.5** Creating sustainable communities is about :



### 3 Key Challenges

- Increasing jobs and economic growth, promoting social justice and improving the quality of life;
- Ensuring that in delivering new development, a sense of place is maintained or created through careful and sympathetic design;
- Encouraging people to get involved in the decisions that affect their community;
- Planning for schools, hospitals, leisure facilities and transport as an integral part of development; and
- Improving the environment, for example by making streets, parks and squares cleaner, safer and greener, and building more environmentally friendly buildings.

#### Other Evidence

**3.6** In addition the Core Strategy has to address issues which have or are emerging from a range of research which the Council has commissioned. Studies include

- Cheshire Retail Study Update (2010);
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010);
- Cheshire Warrington Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2007);
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2010);
- Transport Infrastructure Baseline Position (2010);
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2008); and
- Settlement Hierarchy Study (2010).

**3.7** The following studies are also in progress, and will inform the development of later stages of the Core Strategy:

- Employment Land Review;
- Open Space Survey;
- Green Infrastructure;
- Renewable Energy; and
- Infrastructure Baseline (non transport).

**3.8** Based on the evidence that has been gathered, a number of specific key issues have been identified, as set out in the following sections.

#### Economy

**3.9** A well-performing local economy is vital for the development of sustainable communities. Overall, the Cheshire East economy performs well when considered against regional and national indicators, especially in skill levels, business start-ups and knowledge-based employment. However, this masks significant variations at the local level, with the Crewe economy in particular performing below the Cheshire East average.

**3.10** As indicated in Section 1 of this document, the Council, together with Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Borough Councils, has committed to significant economic growth in the sub-region over the next twenty years or so. This strategy provides for a substantial growth in Gross Value Added, a step change in the economic performance of Crewe, sustaining the success of Macclesfield and surrounding area and revitalising our market

## 3 Key Challenges

towns as employment locations, visitor attractions and service centres. Similarly the Sustainable Community Strategy focuses on the importance of creating conditions for business growth and unlocking the potential of Cheshire East towns.

**3.11** The underlying geology of Cheshire East means that the Borough has a broad range of mineral deposits and resources that are of local, regional and, in some cases, national importance; it is one of the few areas where high quality silica sand for the foundry and glass making industries is found in the UK. In terms of waste, it is essential that it is handled, treated and disposed of in a way that is sensitive to the environment and economical for the local community and businesses. Waste represents a potential resource from which materials, energy and value can be recovered.

**3.12** The sub-regional ambitions and the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy pose considerable challenges for the Core Strategy. These key challenges can be summarised as follows:

- The need to ensure that an adequate supply of land is available for new economic development, meeting the needs of the local economy and helping to facilitate sustainable economic growth;
- The need to encourage employment-generating developments in the right locations, meeting the needs of the local population whilst reducing the need to travel;
- A need to protect good quality employment sites from other forms of higher-value development;
- A need to make provision for occupiers displaced from lower-grade sites redeveloped for alternative uses;
- A need to identify and build on new emerging sectors with strong growth potential;
- Increasing the availability of jobs in deprived areas and pockets of worklessness; addressing a shortage of jobs in the former Congleton area;
- Minimising the skills gap and ensuring that local people are able to take advantage of new opportunities;
- Counteracting increased competition for investment in jobs from other locations, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- Provision of good digital connections to enable innovation and technological improvements;
- Predicted increase in the proportion of older people and a smaller working-age population;
- To address the impacts of climate change, rising energy costs and the need to move towards a low-carbon economy;
- A need to maximise related opportunities arising from the Green Economy;
- Further diversification of the economy to reduce the reliance on a relatively small number of large employers and key sectors that could be vulnerable to future changes in the economy;
- To make efficient use of natural resources, encouraging sustainable production and consumption;
- To reduce waste generation and reliance on landfill disposal, primarily through recycling and composting; and
- To protect key mineral deposits for possible extraction.

## 3 Key Challenges

### Housing

**3.13** Housing plays a significant role in creating sustainable communities, therefore we need to create places where people want to live, improve the quality of our housing stock and make sure that no group of people is disadvantaged because of the housing they have available to them.

**3.14** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2010) plays an important role in informing the amount and mix of types and size of housing required in the Borough. It states that, through natural change alone, the population of the Borough is expected to increase from 362,800 (2009) to 379,300 by 2026. This will mean an increase in the number of households from 138,000 to 171,000 during that same period, pointing to an annual increase of 1,320 households.

**3.15** Over the last decade, strong demand for housing in Cheshire East has contributed to a dramatic increase in house prices and created an acute need for both market and affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community. We want to ensure that sufficient affordable housing is provided across Cheshire East, especially in the areas where the gap between house prices and average earnings is the greatest. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment found that there is a net shortfall in 1,243 affordable houses each year

**3.16** The Strategic Housing Market Assessment also states that the population of Cheshire East is ageing, with an increase of 44% between 2009 and 2026 in the number of residents over the age of 65. This trend will create a significant additional demand for adapted and specialist housing in the Borough.

**3.17** There are a number of key challenges for housing within Cheshire East and these include:

- Identifying an appropriate supply of land for residential development in the most suitable and sustainable locations;
- The creation of balanced communities throughout the Borough by providing an appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures to ensure that residents have a choice of accommodation to meet their current and future needs;
- The provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of the local community;
- Ensuring the provision of appropriate housing to meet the needs of an increasingly ageing population;
- Consider the identified need of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show People communities; and
- The creation of high quality residential environments by ensuring the principles of good design, sustainability and accessibility are incorporated into all new residential developments.

**3.18** The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) assesses sites that have potential for housing development over the next fifteen years. This will be used to inform the formulation of the strategic development options for future housing provision.

## 3 Key Challenges

### Retail / Town Centres

**3.19** The services and facilities that town centres provide are vital for local communities and their surrounding areas, with an appropriate range providing opportunities for communities to be self-contained, reducing the need to travel, amongst other outcomes. Cheshire East has a diverse retail offer that includes thriving markets and unit-based shopping centres, with the vitality of these centres varying across the Borough. It is recognised that the vitality of our town centres very much impact on the image of the area and its attractiveness as a place to invest, live and visit.

**3.20** A supporting 'Cheshire Retail Study Update' document has been produced, the contents of which will be taken into account in due course in determining the future capacity for additional retail floorspace in our town centres. The key challenges for the Core Strategy in respect of retailing and town centres are:

- To facilitate major regeneration schemes and revitalisation in Crewe and Macclesfield town centres;
- In our smaller towns in the Borough, to create attractive, vital and viable town centres to support the wider economy;
- To ensure the retail needs of communities are met;
- Provision of an appropriate range of services and facilities within all our town centres;
- The retention of local distinctiveness within the town centres;
- The management of evening and night-time economies; and
- To retain village shops, recognising their role as community facilities;

### Accessibility and Transport

**3.21** Accessibility of settlements and transportation choices can influence travel patterns and levels of sustainability within the Borough. Accessible locations via a choice of transportation methods has an impact upon the functionality of individual settlements and how they interrelate. It can also have an impact upon climate change and the carbon footprint of individuals, organisations and the Borough overall.

**3.22** Locationally, Cheshire East has excellent national and international transport links via the motorway network, rail connections and proximity to Manchester and Liverpool airports. All of the main settlements are connected by regular bus services. Public transport choices in rural areas are, however, far more limited.

**3.23** There are a number of key challenges for the Core Strategy in relation to the issue of accessibility and transportation. These include:

- Encouraging development in accessible locations; sites should have good accessibility by means other than the car to key services including health, retail, education, employment and leisure;
- Ensuring that, where new development is proposed, the transport infrastructure necessary to serve that development is delivered;



### 3 Key Challenges

- Promoting sustainable travel options, by enhancing the current footpath, cycling and bridle networks, protecting the current waterways, rail lines and bus routes and providing new infrastructure where appropriate;
- Improving transport links to serve major growth at Crewe and to provide better access to the Motorway network at Junctions 16, 17 and 18 of the M6.
- Improving access to services in rural areas;
- The need to address areas of poor integration between different forms of transport and interconnecting issues with the frequency of public transport connections especially in the more rural areas of the Borough;
- To reduce delay on the road networks by minimising the need to travel and promoting alternative methods of transportation;
- Improving passenger and interchange facilities at our railway stations;
- Improving the frequency of rail services; and
- Improving facilities for cycling at our stations.

### Health and Wellbeing

**3.24** The health of Cheshire East residents is generally better than the England average. <sup>(6)</sup> Residents enjoy a good overall quality of life. Despite this, there are some parts of Cheshire East where the experience is different. Around 6% of our population live in neighbourhoods classified as being in the 20% most deprived nationally. <sup>(7)</sup> There are some significant health inequalities between parts of Cheshire East, with life expectancies varying considerably between the relatively more deprived parts of Crewe and the less deprived areas of settlements such as Wilmslow.

**3.25** In addition to an individual's lifestyle and health choices, we must also consider the 'social determinants of health'. For example the quality of someone's housing can affect their health; the amount of income a family has can impact on their ability to enjoy a healthy standard of living; access to good transport may influence someone's ability to see their doctor or attend a local service. Our challenge is to enable everyone to have the same opportunities as their neighbours and for no-one to be disadvantaged because of where they live or any other factor such as their age, gender, physical ability, ethnicity and so on.

**3.26** There are a number of key challenges for the Core Strategy to address for the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents; these can be summarised as follows:

- Enable everyone to have access to the same opportunities as the next neighbourhood or settlement area;
- Ensure that we have an adequate supply of suitable extra care housing and improved access to services frequently used by older people;
- Demographic changes will have to be planned for to keep residents fit and active and enable Cheshire East residents to enjoy a healthy older age and lower the risk of long term illness;
- Reducing the impacts of the differences in prosperity in Cheshire East through increased access to services, employment and educational opportunities;

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6 Association of Public Observatories 2010

7 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation

## 3 Key Challenges

- Improved air quality across Cheshire East, with a focus on reducing pollution and emissions in problematic areas;
- Improved access to health services, recreational facilities and open spaces to enable residents to live their life in a healthy way; and
- Increased provision of green infrastructure, amenities, services, public transport and other key determinants of health and wellbeing in the Borough.

### Open Space, Sport and Leisure

**3.27** Open spaces and the opportunities they offer are highly valued by the community and link crucially with both physical and mental health. The challenges facing open space provision are broad ranging and centre round how to deal with the aspirations and expectations of the communities living in the densely populated residential areas of Cheshire East. Many of the challenges are not new and have emerged from previous consultation exercises such as the development of park and play strategies and previous open space audits. Some newer challenges such as biodiversity and climate change now have to be examined in more detail. A supporting 'Open Space Study' document is currently being produced, the contents of which will be taken into account in due course. The key challenges for the Core Strategy to address are:

- To ensure quality and variety in outdoor play spaces;
- A need for local facilities to be accessible on foot;
- To deal with the open space deficiencies and refurbish and improve certain facilities and areas;
- Address skills issues regarding grounds maintenance and the need to respond to cleanliness and damage issues promptly;
- Improve communication and liaison between the various providers and users of open space;
- Take advantage of opportunities for increasing the biodiversity of open spaces;
- To conserve, enhance and where necessary provide additional Green Infrastructure in the Borough, including open spaces, countryside, woodlands, lakes, private gardens and the setting of the Peak District National Park; and
- Utilising our landscape, for example green infrastructure for urban cooling and functional flood plains, as well as the identification of carbon sinks that absorb and store emissions.

### Environment

**3.28** The built and natural environment play an important part in the character of Cheshire East and includes areas of high landscape quality, soil and water quality and its built heritage. The Borough has a wide and varied landscape that is of significant value both for wildlife habitats and as a recreation resource. It has a diverse and varied history, reflected in its social and architectural legacy.

**3.29** The aquatic environment is another important resource, creating a valuable habitat in its own right and a link between other fragmented habitats, as well as acting as a source of water for human activities. However, despite the numerous benefits of water, it poses a threat through flooding.

### 3 Key Challenges

**3.30** There are therefore many environmental challenges within Cheshire East that have been summarised as:

- To conserve and enhance the geodiversity and biodiversity of the Borough, paying particular attention to important wildlife and habitat sites and areas under threat;
- To conserve and enhance the numerous historically important sites and their settings. Particularly those sites designated as Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, registered Historic Parks and archaeological sites;
- To manage and mitigate flood risk in the Borough;
- Safeguarding land from development that is required for current and future flood management;
- Reducing flood risk to and from new development through location, layout and design, and through the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (suds). This is especially important for infrastructure;
- Conserving water through measures used in the construction and use of new developments;
- To manage the significant development pressures on land within the Borough to balance the need for development and the requirement to protect existing natural and man-made environments, particularly those protected by statutory designations;
- To make effective use of existing buildings, previously developed land and existing infrastructure;
- Ensure new development meets a high standard of energy efficiency, so reducing carbon emissions, through using the energy hierarchy, and using the siting and layout of the development to maximise solar gain and natural light, for example;
- Incorporate low and zero carbon energy requirements into new developments, through decentralised energy supply, as well as through the use of combined/district heating networks; and
- To protect the environment by minimising pollution on land, in water and in the air.

### 4 Spatial Vision

**4.1** The Local Development Framework, and in particular the Core Strategy, provides the mechanism through which the spatial elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy can be delivered. The Spatial Vision of the Core Strategy provides a picture of the type of place we wish Cheshire East to be in 2030 and beyond. From this vision, the Core Strategy objectives and growth options will be developed.

**4.2** A draft Spatial Vision for Cheshire East is set out below:

#### **Draft Spatial Vision for Cheshire East**

**Cheshire East** in 2030 will continue to be a thriving area with sustainable urban and rural communities set within attractive countryside. In 2030 and beyond, Cheshire East will be an economically prosperous area, with a strong and diverse employment base and low unemployment. It will be home to both multi-national companies and a large number of small and medium enterprises and will continue to benefit from its strategic location close to the Greater Manchester and Potteries conurbations and with excellent road and rail links to the rest of the country.

Cheshire East will continue to be a desirable place to live, with lively and attractive towns and villages, surrounded by beautiful countryside. The population of the Borough will have increased significantly and this growth will have been largely accommodated in sustainable urban extensions and through the sensitive redevelopment of previous developed land. The infrastructure to support this growth will have been delivered in partnership with other organisations and affordable housing to meet local needs will have been provided in mixed communities united by a strong local identity. Crime will have reduced and people will feel safe in their neighbourhoods and town centres.

Cheshire East will have a thriving and diversified economy; employment opportunities will have increased with the development of new high quality employment sites that meet the needs of the 21st Century economy and through the redevelopment of our town centres. Based primarily on its landscape and heritage assets, Cheshire East's importance as a tourism destination will have increased.

People in the towns and villages will have a high quality of life with good access to education, jobs, services, shops and public transport, mostly within walking and cycling distances. The transport infrastructure will have been improved and there will be reduced congestion and better access to public transport throughout the Borough, with an extensive network of pedestrian routes and cycleways.

People will lead healthy and active lifestyles benefiting from improved access to sporting facilities, high quality open spaces and the open countryside while being supported by a good network of local health centres.



## 4 Spatial Vision

The town centres of Crewe, Macclesfield, Congleton and Wilmslow will be thriving retail and leisure destinations, reducing the need to travel to larger centres. Smaller centres will provide a range of shops and services catering for local needs in the suburban and rural areas.

Cheshire East will play a lead role in reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change, through increased generation of renewable energy and the incorporation of community heat and power systems, energy efficient buildings and more sustainable patterns of development that enable more people to travel by public transport, cycle or on foot.

The Borough will be coping well with the challenges of an ageing population, partly by retaining larger numbers of younger people and families (through the provision of an appropriate range of housing in terms of size and tenure), who will help support the older communities but also through increased investment in accommodation for the elderly.

By 2030, **Crewe** will have been transformed into a vibrant sub-regional centre with significant investment in the town centre, employment, housing, education and infrastructure.

Crewe town centre and the corridor to the railway station will be redeveloped to provide substantially improved retail leisure and cultural facilities.

The railway station will have been remodelled so that it is fit for purpose in the 21st Century including an enhanced bus interchange and safer passenger facilities.

The Basford employment sites will have been developed to create a regionally significant employment development including a science orientated business/innovation park.

Sustainable urban extensions will have been developed providing an integrated approach to the growth in the town's population and a range of housing choices in an attractive and sustainable environment. The provision of social and community infrastructure will have been an integral part of the new housing development.

The West End and other deprived areas of Crewe will have undergone regeneration including the improvement of the physical fabric of these areas covering housing, public realm and connectivity.

Significant change will also have taken place in the town of **Macclesfield**. The redevelopment of the town centre will have taken place to better meet the needs of the community, improving the town's retail, office, tourism and leisure facilities and its culture and heritage. More people will live and work in the town centre, adding vibrancy during the day and into the evening, which together with environmental improvements will have created a safe and desirable place for residents and visitors alike.

## 4 Spatial Vision

The potential of the South Macclesfield Development Area will have been realised providing new housing, job opportunities and leisure facilities. Employers, landowners and developers will have worked with the Council to improve the local transport infrastructure.

Outside Crewe and Macclesfield, a network of vibrant and prosperous smaller towns will exist that have reinforced their roles as local service centres providing employment, housing and a range of shopping, education, healthcare, cultural, leisure and other services to the local area. **Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach** and **Wilmslow** will be the main centres for growth, with new housing and employment development in sustainable locations. Here, smaller independent traders will have continued to thrive, contributing to a strong sense of place. New high quality homes and business premises will have met local needs and those wishing to live and work here.

In some of our larger villages, which provide a reasonable range of shops and services, such as **Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington** and **Wrenbury**, some modest growth in housing and employment will have taken place to meet local needs, to reduce the level of out-commuting and to secure their continuing vitality.

The rural economy will have grown stronger and diversified, based primarily on agriculture but supplemented by appropriate small-scale tourism, recreation and other rural businesses. At the same time, our many areas of landscape value and sites of nature conservation importance will have been protected from development.

## 5 Spatial Objectives

### 5 Spatial Objectives

**5.1** Building on this vision, a number of key objectives for Cheshire East have been developed. These are:

**5.2 Reducing the Borough's impact on climate change by establishing sustainable patterns of development, and by prudently managing natural resources, promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency.** This will be delivered by:

- Building homes that are close, or easily accessible, to where people work, shop and enjoy recreational activities;
- Focusing development in locations that have efficient and reliable public transport;
- Building homes and commercial premises that are energy efficient and produce lower carbon emissions and are designed to take account of the effects of climate change;
- Increasing the use of renewable energy and low carbon energy, e.g. wind power, biomass and solar power;
- Avoiding developing land that may be at risk from the effects of climate change, e.g. areas liable to flooding;
- Promoting the management and containment of waste within the Borough; and
- Addressing the local causes of water, air, light and noise pollution and the contamination of land.

**5.3 Promoting economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth.** This will be delivered by:

- Harnessing emerging growth opportunities to develop a sustainable and diverse employment base in the Borough;
- Capitalising on the attractiveness of environment of the Borough and accessibility to support indigenous businesses, attract inward investment and facilitate the growth of new firms;
- Providing an adequate supply of employment sites of various types and sizes across the Borough; and
- Securing the infrastructure to develop the strategic employment sites such as Basford at Crewe, Midpoint 18 Phase 3 at Middlewich and the South Macclesfield Development Area.

**5.4 Delivering sufficient housing in terms of quantity, quality, tenure, affordability and location to meet the Borough's needs.** This will be delivered by:

- Providing for a significant number of new dwellings in all parts of the Borough to 2030 to support economic growth and development;
- Ensuring that there is an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures;
- Ensuring that there is enough affordable housing for those who need it;
- Ensuring that there is an adequate supply of housing for people with disabilities and other special needs; and
- Ensuring that new housing development is well designed and energy efficient.

## 5 Spatial Objectives

**5.5 Supporting the vitality and accessibility of our town centres.** This will be delivered by:

- Delivering major regeneration schemes in Crewe and Macclesfield in order to provide an enhanced retail offer and improved environmental quality;
- Maintaining and enhancing the distinct character and physical environment of the town centres of the Borough's smaller towns to ensure they remain vibrant, attractive and accessible;
- Focusing shops, community and leisure facilities in town and local centres;
- Improving the environmental quality of our town and local centres, e.g. by improving the public realm; and
- Improving the accessibility of our town centres, e.g. by improvements to bus and rail stations and services.

**5.6 Developing improved transport and infrastructure networks.** This will be delivered by:

- By 2030 ensuring that a comprehensive and sustainable transport network will be in place that is efficient, safe, affordable, accessible, easy to understand and supports the Borough's long term growth;
- Giving priority to walking, cycling and public transport and providing a genuine choice of modes; and
- The community infrastructure needs arising from the Borough's growth will have been adequately funded and provided in a timely and co-ordinated manner.

**5.7 Working in partnership to provide cultural, social, community and physical infrastructure.** This will be delivered by:

- Providing for and improving the quality of cultural, sport, recreation and leisure facilities; and
- Improving the links between existing and new neighbourhoods.

**5.8 Conserving and enhancing the natural and built heritage.** This will be delivered by:

- Enhancing and managing the built, historic, cultural and natural resources and assets and ensuring a high quality, well designed, energy efficient and safe public realm and buildings;
- Provide and maintain high quality and accessible green infrastructure;
- Protect and expand a resilient network of wildlife sites that are adapted to climate change and create a more bio-diverse public realm; and
- Retain and enhance local character and distinctiveness.



## 5 Spatial Objectives

### Question 1

**Do you agree with these seven key objectives?**

### Question 2

**Are there any other key objectives that should be considered?**

### Question 3

**Can you identify any additional ways of delivering these key objectives?**

### 6 Strategic Options

**6.1** As we have seen, in its Core Strategy Cheshire East will need to respond to many challenges over the next twenty years including revitalisation of the economy, climate change, population growth, increasing housing need and an ageing population.

**6.2** Determining future levels of housing provision and employment land for individual planning authorities have until recently been the responsibility of the regional planning authority. However, in July 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) with immediate effect. It is therefore now for Cheshire East to consider and decide the appropriate level of housing and job growth for the Borough, although the Council will have to justify the housing and job numbers that are finally decided upon. The Core Strategy will still need to identify broad areas of land to deliver the Council's housing numbers and new employment land for at least 15 years from the date the plan is adopted.

**6.3** There are a number of issues to take into account in deciding the appropriate scale of growth. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) suggests that there is a substantial requirement for new housing to meet the needs of the existing population within Cheshire East, even before considering the possibility of migration in to the Borough from outside the area. Research shows that approximately 75% of the overall identified need is locally generated. It has identified a high level of need for affordable housing (1,243 per annum) and also a high level of need for general market housing (around 2,800 per annum). The Council has subscribed to the sub regional strategy "Unleashing the Potential" that envisages substantial economic and population growth. This strategy proposes a 25% growth in jobs and population of Crewe together with growth in Macclesfield and surrounding area and in the Weaver Towns including Middlewich. This ambition for growth is also reflected in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

**6.4** In determining the level of growth, it is also important to take into account the likely capacity of the development industry to deliver growth, the capacity of the existing physical and social infrastructure to accommodate growth and the need to preserve cherished parts of the environment.

**6.5** The Council is currently undertaking an Employment Land Review which will identify the nature and scale of employment land needed in the Borough to meet its requirements up to 2030. Whilst the amount of land required in future for Cheshire East has not yet been quantified, we know that currently within Cheshire East there are around 306 hectares of land either allocated, having planning permission or under construction for employment purposes. Over half of this figure, however, is accounted for by four large sites, as follows:

- Basford East (43 hectares): allocated for employment uses, however development is dependent upon completion of Crewe Green Link Road.
- Basford West (55 hectares): site with planning permission for employment uses

## 6 Strategic Options

- Midpoint 18 Phase 3 (53 hectares): Site with outline planning permission primarily for employment development. However, development will be dependent upon the completion of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.
- South Macclesfield Development Area (22 hectares): site allocated for mixed use development with a focus on employment uses. Development is dependent upon a new highway.

**6.6** Three of these four sites are, therefore, severely constrained by infrastructure requirements and the actual timing of their development is extremely uncertain. Whilst we also know that Cheshire East as a whole is performing relatively well, contributing around 7% of the North west's economic output, there are significant variations at a local level. For example the Crewe economy performs well below the Cheshire East average, but some wards display high levels of worklessness, ill health and poverty. There are also pockets of deprivation in the north of the Borough. In parts of the Borough there is a dependence on a small number of large employers. This represents a high risk, particularly in times of recession and points to a need to diversify and encourage the growth of new businesses.

**6.7** One of the objectives of the Council's draft Economic Development Strategy is to 'unlock development opportunities' in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy. The main priorities to achieve this objective are to:

- Stimulate regeneration in our town centres, recognising their retail, leisure and employment role, both in terms of economic development and cohesive communities
- Actively working to bring forward and promote the availability of strategic employment sites that are commercially attractive to investors, developers and occupiers
- Supporting development of smaller employment sites in appropriate locations
- Challenging the loss of existing employment sites for other uses through the planning process
- Ensuring the availability of a range of workspace for start-up and micro businesses that meet their needs in terms of location cost, quality and flexibility

**6.8** In order to achieve these objectives, to tackle issues of deprivation and to diversify and strengthen the economy, a significant growth in jobs across Cheshire East will be required, together with the allocation of deliverable sites for employment uses.

**6.9** Initial work on housing and job growth for the North West was undertaken at the regional and sub-regional level to inform the preparation of the Single Regional Strategy (RS2010). That work has been abandoned, however it does give an indication of the possible ranges for growth for Cheshire East. Having regard to that work and to the context set out above, three scenarios for housing and job growth have been formulated for discussion and consultation. The three options are based on low, medium and high levels of growth respectively and are set out in table 6.1 below.

**6.10** The forecasts show that a range of between 1,150 and 1,600 net additional dwellings per annum (p.a.) should be provided in Cheshire East. This equates to a difference in provision of some 9,000 dwellings up to 2030. For comparison purposes, past housing completions in Cheshire East show an average completion rate of 1,147 dwellings p.a. for

## 6 Strategic Options

the 10 year period between 2000 and 2010. It should be noted however that between 2006 and 2008 there were severe restrictions on new housebuilding in place in the former Macclesfield and Congleton Borough Council areas.

**6.11** The forecasts for job growth show an average range of between 375 and 948 jobs provided per annum up to 2030. However, the relationship between housing and employment is a complex one, not least because of peoples' commuting patterns. These forecasts will need to be translated into suitable land provision for employment in the Core Strategy. The Council's Employment Land Review work will be instrumental in determining the nature and location of employment land provision.

**6.12** For the purposes of this consultation exercise we would like your views on whether the Council should pursue a low, medium or high growth strategy for housing and employment to 2030.

Growth Strategy	Average Housing p.a.	Average Change in Jobs p.a	Implications
Low	1150	350	This option would provide for a continuation in the average levels of housing provision achieved during the past decade. Therefore, it would not provide for all the locally generated housing needs of the existing population of Cheshire East. Opportunities for additional affordable housing and job growth would be more limited, resulting in less scope to create the better balanced and sustainable communities desired within the Borough.
Medium	1350	650	This option would provide for the approximate housing needs of the existing population but would not allow for any net migration into the area. The levels of employment growth would help to reduce out commuting by creating a better balance of job opportunities to housing within communities in the Borough, but will not deliver the levels of growth needed to deliver the agreed economic strategy.
High	1600	950	This option is most likely to deliver the economic growth aimed at in the Sub regional Strategy 'Unleashing the Potential'. It will achieve the highest level of affordable housing and will be the option most likely to reduce out-commuting. It will also best achieve funding for new transport, social and green infrastructure provision.

**Table 6.1 Suggested Growth Strategy Options**

## 6 Strategic Options

**6.13** In reaching this decision it is important to remember the key challenges identified in section 3 that need to be addressed and the possible consequences that will arise for Cheshire East residents if insufficient provision is made for housing and employment. Of central importance is the need to maintain and enhance the vibrancy of our communities. This means providing a level of growth that would increase the opportunity to live and work within our communities, reduce out commuting and the possibility of dormitory communities, allow economic restructuring and increased productivity, as well as improvements to the level and range of facilities present in communities and their accessibility, particularly by public transport.

### Question 4

**Which of these growth scenarios provides the most appropriate starting point from which to develop the Core Strategy and why?**

### Question 5

**Why are the other growth scenarios not as appropriate?**

### Question 6

**Are there any other alternative scenarios for growth that should be considered?**



### 7 Spatial Options

**7.1** This section considers alternative scenarios for how we develop the towns and villages of Cheshire East over the next 20 years or so. The options are presented to stimulate debate about the potential opportunities for growth and to consider how well they will deliver the spatial objectives and address the challenges facing the Borough. There is no "Preferred Option" at this stage; this will be developed following consultation on the Issues and Options Report and in the light of the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

**7.2** Firstly, a baseline position is established which looks at what would happen if all towns and villages grew in proportion to their existing size. Three alternative options are proposed to consider the effects of focusing different levels of growth in different towns. All three options take as their starting point the development of Crewe as the key driver for future growth as proposed in the Crewe Vision, and the vision for the regeneration of Macclesfield set out in the Macclesfield Economic Masterplan. The three options consider alternative levels of growth in Crewe, Macclesfield and the Key Service Centres.

**7.3** All three options propose low levels of growth in the Local Service Centres and small villages to support the strategy for sustainable development which focuses development towards those settlements with a good range of services and facilities. The level of growth proposed would be sufficient to deliver sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs of the rural areas. However, the baseline position shows that up to 30% of the population of the Borough currently resides in these small communities and there is evidence that there is a demand for more market housing to meet the needs of small rural communities. To enable an assessment to be undertaken of a more dispersed pattern of development, a variant is proposed that can be applied to any of the three options that considers the impact of distributing higher levels of development to rural communities in Local Service Centres and small villages.

**7.4** The growth options consider the rate of growth of towns in terms of new housing and economic development. There will also need to be a complementary investment in and growth of services such as schools, health care and leisure and community facilities to support any growth in population.

**7.5** An Infrastructure Plan is being prepared to support the implementation of Local Development Framework. This will set out the significant items of infrastructure that will be required to enable development to take place and consider the funding and phasing requirements.

**7.6** Delivering the Crewe Vision will require significant investment to improve the road network around Crewe to improve the linkages to the M6, in particular the Crewe Green Link Road and the Barthomley Link Road. Investment will also be required to improve in particular the train station at Crewe and roads to the town centre. In view of the current economic climate and reduction in the amount of central government investment that is likely to be available for infrastructure in the future, the Infrastructure Plan will consider how the investment can be secured and the likely timescales. Contingency plans will need to be drawn up to consider how development in Crewe can be phased should the necessary infrastructure be delayed.

## 7 Spatial Options

**7.7** Developing a strategy for the future growth of the Borough provides the opportunity for us to consider how we can best locate and design development so as to minimise its impact on the environment in particular to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. We also need to take account of the impact that climate change will have on the area in the future and build measures into developments that will reduce the impacts of climate change, particularly of increased incidents of flooding and higher temperatures. This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring that sustainable patterns of development are selected by ensuring that there is easy access from the home to employment areas, town and local centres, schools and colleges by means of transport other than the car e.g. by public transport, walking and cycling
- Making the best use of land and other resources
- Reducing the amount of waste
- Avoiding developing areas at risk of flooding
- Ensuring that new development is well designed, energy and water efficient
- Including sustainable drainage solutions into the design of the scheme to reduce run-off rates
- Promoting the enhancement of the green infrastructure networks, increasing woodland cover, safeguarding wetlands and considering the impact of development on the entire water cycle.
- Including the development of renewable energy and low carbon energy as part of new development, making use of local sources of energy such as geothermal heat, biomass and water.

**7.8** The Options presented in this section refer to the designations of Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres and villages. The Cheshire East Settlement Study has considered a number of factors such as the population, number of shops, schools and community facilities to determine the role of each town and village. The Settlement Study forms part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. The proposed hierarchy is set out below:

Designation	Description	Settlements
<b>Principal Town</b>	The largest towns with a wide range of employment, retail, education opportunities and services, serving a large catchment area with high level of accessibility and good public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crewe</li><li>• Macclesfield</li></ul>
<b>Key Service Centre</b>	Towns with a range of employment, retail, education opportunities and services, with good public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alsager</li><li>• Congleton</li><li>• Handforth</li><li>• Knutsford</li><li>• Middlewich</li><li>• Nantwich</li><li>• Poynton</li><li>• Sandbach</li><li>• Wilmslow</li></ul>

## 7 Spatial Options

Designation	Description	Settlements
<b>Local Service Centre</b>	Smaller centres with a limited range of employment, retail, education opportunities and services, with a lower level of access to public transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alderley Edge</li> <li>• Audlem</li> <li>• Bollington</li> <li>• Bunbury</li> <li>• Chelford</li> <li>• Disley</li> <li>• Goostrey</li> <li>• Haslington</li> <li>• Holmes Chapel</li> <li>• Mobberley</li> <li>• Prestbury</li> <li>• Shavington</li> <li>• Wrenbury</li> </ul>

**Table 7.1 Cheshire East Settlement Hierarchy**

### Question 7

Do you agree with the proposed Cheshire East settlement hierarchy? Yes No

### Question 8

Comment

## 7 Spatial Options

### Baseline Position

**7.9** The baseline scenario looks at what Cheshire East would look like if each of the towns and villages grew in proportion to their current size. This scenario is not presented as an option; it helps our understanding of the current distribution of development. It will be used to aid comparisons of the alternative options to help understand the differences between the choices for the distribution of future development. This scenario would generally continue trends in development which have occurred over the past twenty years and more, although for some settlements that have been tightly constrained by Green Belt there would be a higher rate of development than has been experienced in recent years. The baseline position would have a very dispersed pattern of development with about 30% of new development in Local Service Centres and villages.

### Development Distribution

**7.10** The table below indicates the approximate proportion of new dwellings and jobs that would be identified for each settlement tier.

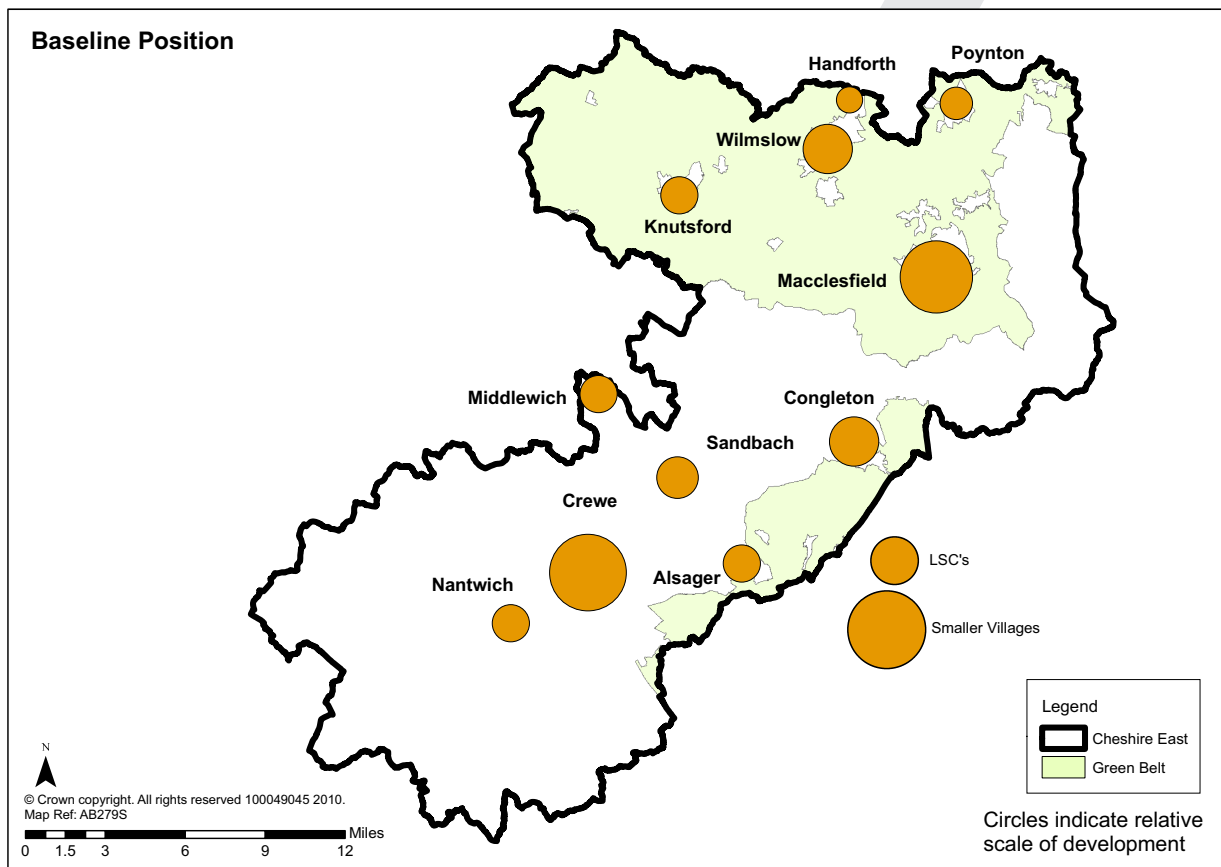
Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Dwellings (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	32%	10,250	8,650	7,350
Key Service Centres	39%	12,500	10,550	8,950
Local Service Centres	11%	3,500	2,950	2,550
Smaller Villages	18%	5,750	4,850	4,150

**Table 7.2 Housing Development Distribution**

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	32%	6,100	4,150	2,250
Key Service Centres	39%	7,400	5,050	2,730
Local Service Centres	11%	2,100	1,450	750
Smaller Villages	18%	3,400	2,350	1,250

**Table 7.3 Job Distribution**

## 7 Spatial Options



**Figure 7.1 Baseline Position - Development Proportions and Dispersal for Principal Towns and KSCs (MAP TO BE UPDATED)**



## 7 Spatial Options

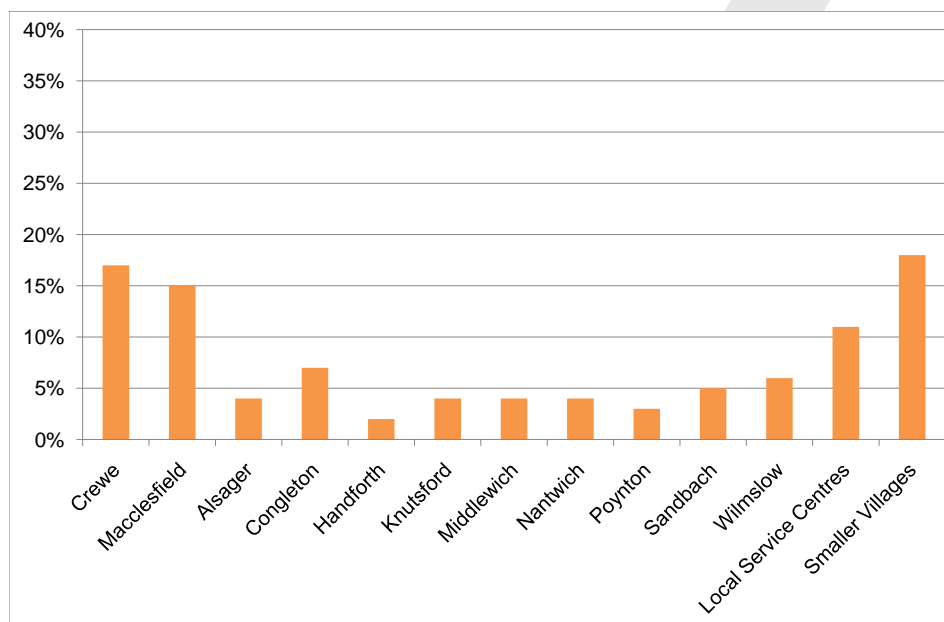


Figure 7.2 Baseline Position - Development Proportions by Place

### What would this scenario deliver?

**7.11** Growth would be in proportion to the size of the existing settlement. This would result in a reasonable amount of development in both Crewe and Macclesfield and each of the Key Service Centres. There would be a continuation of the dispersed pattern of development that exists in Cheshire East with about 30% of new development taking place in Local Service Centres and small villages. The potential outcomes of this option are as follows:

- **Sustainable Development** - Development would be spread throughout all the settlements of the Borough with a high proportion of new development in Local Service Centres and Villages. As a consequence more people would have to travel longer distances to work, shop and schools and to access community services.
- **Economy** - The level of development in Crewe might not be sufficient to secure the infrastructure or investment for the delivery of the strategic employment sites at Basford in Crewe. The higher level of growth in Local Service Centres and villages may lead to an increase in small scale rural employment particularly if high speed broadband is delivered, however this is unlikely to deliver the same number of jobs that larger development in the principal towns could. It may lead to increased journeys to work in rural areas from people resident in towns.
- **Housing** - New housing would be delivered in all settlements in the Borough and would deliver a good range to meet local needs in terms of affordability, mix of house types and tenures. This option would result in a significant amount of incremental development on the edge of villages.

## 7 Spatial Options

- **Town Centres** - The scale of growth for Crewe and Macclesfield may not provide the impetus for planned redevelopment of their town centres. Levels of development proposed in Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres should help support the retention of shops and services in these centres.
- **Transport and Accessibility** - this pattern of growth will result in increased car usage and will not support investment in improved public transport networks. More people will have to travel further to access services and there may be increased public sector costs in providing services to a dispersed community eg in terms of transport to school and hospital.
- **Infrastructure** - It is unlikely that the scale of growth would be sufficient to result in the critical mass of development required to encourage public and private investment in larger scale infrastructure provision or improvements especially in Crewe and Macclesfield. This option would not deliver the aims of the Crewe Vision initiative and may result in a pattern and distribution of development which would result in increased traffic levels dispersed across the Borough.
- **Natural and Built Heritage** - The focus of safeguarding and enhancing heritage and environmental assets would remain. The level of development in Local Service Centres and small villages would result in an impact on the character of these settlements and the adjacent countryside in a large number of locations. Development in rural locations is likely to be low density and would take up a greater area of land.
- **Green Belt** - There will be a requirement to release Green Belt land around Macclesfield and Key and Local Service Centres within the Green Belt including the settlements of Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow, as there are very few brownfield sites available. There are very few sites available in villages in the Green Belt.

### Risk Assessment

- Inability to deliver investment in infrastructure to deliver employment sites at Basford, Crewe and Midpoint 18 at Middlewich.
- Lack of critical mass of population in Crewe and Macclesfield to attract investors into the town centres
- Cost of delivering public services to increased rural population, especially for old people and children
- Increased car dependency and lack of investment in public transport
- Need to release a large number of sites in the Green Belt
- Impact on the character and landscape setting of a large number of small villages
- More lower density housing development requiring a larger area of land
- Unlikely to deliver reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

## 7 Spatial Options

### Option 1: Growth in Crewe and Key Service Centres outside of Green Belt

**7.12** Under this option, a high proportion of development over the next 15 - 20 years would occur in the southern part of the Borough with the focus of development on delivering the Crewe Vision and maximising Crewe's role, not just as the sub-regional centre for south Cheshire, but also as the main driver of growth for the whole of Cheshire East. It would build on the town's recent economic successes and the availability of a supply of skilled labour, provide a wider choice of homes and supporting services.

**7.13** The Key Service Centres in the southern part of the Borough (Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Nantwich and Sandbach) would also be the focus for growth. This would help to deliver the redevelopment of a number of large vacant sites, but would also require development of greenfield sites on the edge of these towns.

**7.14** There would be limited growth in Macclesfield and Key Service Centres in the northern part of the Borough with no release of sites from the Green Belt.

**7.15** There would be a limited amount of development in and on the edge of the Local Service Centres and small villages where this could be accommodated without releasing the Green Belt.

### Development Distribution

**7.16** The table below indicates the approximate proportion of new dwellings that would be identified for each settlement tier.

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Housing (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	46%	14,400	12,400	10,600
Key Service Centres	45%	15,700	12,700	10,350
Local Service Centres	7%	1,600	1,600	1,600
Smaller Villages	2%	300	250	450

**Table 7.4 Housing Development Distribution**

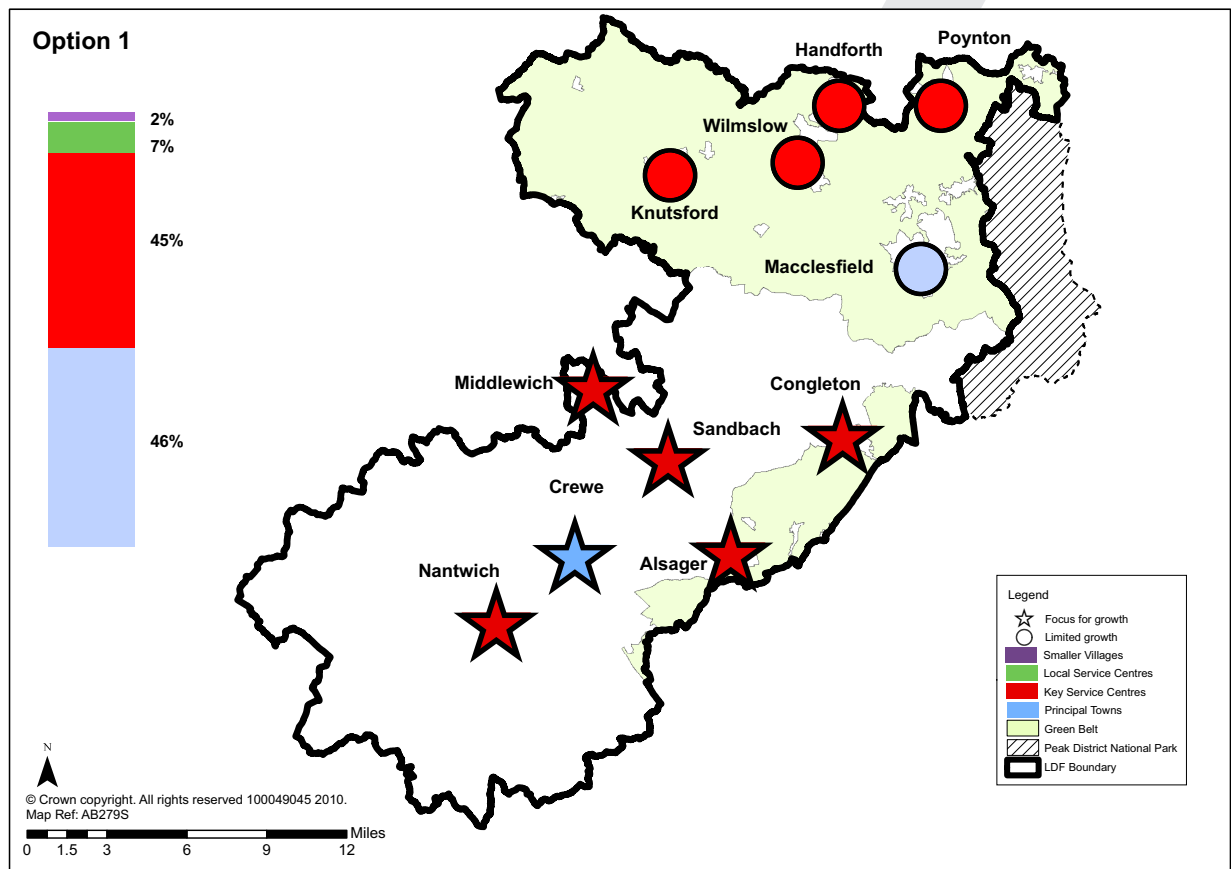
Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	46%	8,550	6,000	3,200
Key Service Centres	45%	9,300	6,100	3,150
Local Service Centres	7%	950	800	500

## 7 Spatial Options

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Smaller Villages	2%	200	150	150

**Table 7.5 Job Distribution**

## 7 Spatial Options



**Figure 7.3 Option 1 - Development Proportions and Dispersal for Principal Towns and the KSCs**



## 7 Spatial Options

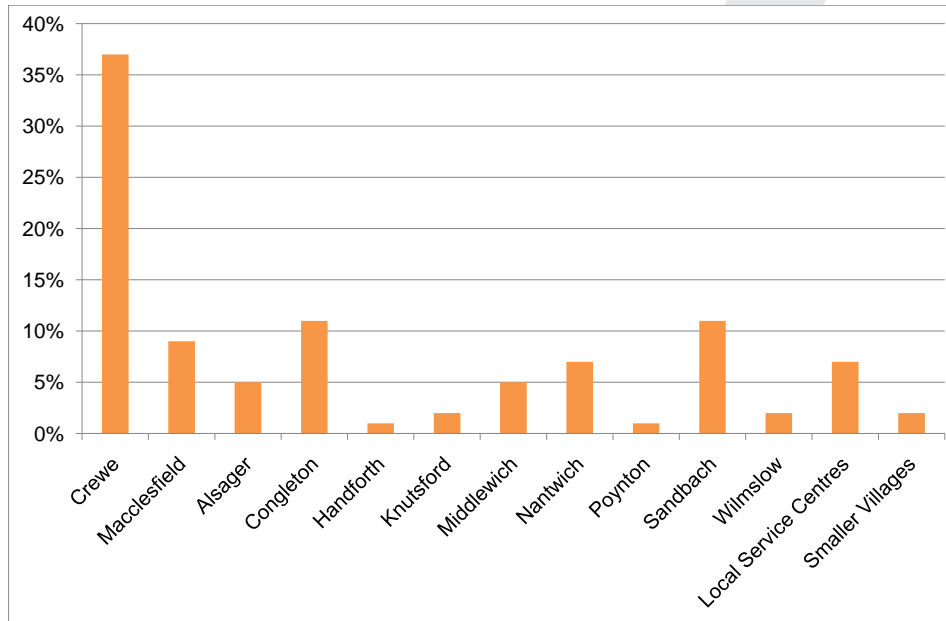


Figure 7.4 Option 1 - Development Proportions by Place

### What will the Option deliver?

**7.17** The potential outcomes of this option are as follows:

- Sustainable Development** – Crewe will become the focal point and driver for new growth in Cheshire East with the aim of delivering new employment areas of regional importance to attract inward investment into the Borough. Five of the key Service Centres will be developed to provide a good range of jobs, homes and services. There will be low levels of development in Macclesfield and the Key Service Centres in the north of the Borough which may not be sufficient to meet the needs of the local population and the current problems of high house prices and commuting patterns are likely to continue.
- Economy** - This option would deliver the aspirations for economic growth set out in the Crewe Vision and support the delivery of the regionally important employment sites at Basford at Crewe and Midpoint 18 at Middlewich. Growth in Macclesfield would be focused on the South Macclesfield area and in the town centre. A sustainable and diverse employment base would be developed in the 5 Key Service Centres in the south of the Borough. There are limited opportunities for investing in new employment areas in Key Services Centres in the north of the Borough.
- Housing** - New housing would be delivered in Crewe and the 5 Key Services Centres in the south of the Borough and would deliver a good range to meet local needs in terms of affordability, mix of house types and tenures. There would be limited provision of new housing in Macclesfield and the Key Services Centres in the north, and this is likely to exacerbate problems of affordability and limited choice in these towns. A limited amount

## 7 Spatial Options

of new housing would be developed in the Local Service Centres and small villages mainly to provide affordable housing for rural areas.

- **Town Centres** - Significant investment in Crewe would act as a strong incentive to attract investors to revitalise Crewe town centre. Development in the 5 Key Service Centres in the south of the Borough may help to bring more people into these centres and attract investment. There is uncertainty about whether the limited growth in Macclesfield and the Key Service Centres to the north of the Borough would be sufficient to attract investment into these centres.
- **Transport and Accessibility** - Crewe is readily accessible by car and public transport from the towns and villages of the south of the Borough with good links to the motorway network. However linkages with the towns in the northern part of the Borough are not as good as they tend to look towards Manchester and they are not likely to gain as much benefit from the growth of Crewe.
- **Infrastructure** - Significant growth in Crewe would require investment in major new infrastructure, for example the completion of the Crewe Green Link Road and the Barthomley Link Road. There would also be a need to consider improvements to roads to the town centre which are constrained by narrow roads over the railway lines. New transport links between the north of the town and the Basford employment areas could be delivered, and park and ride facilities on the edges of the urban area considered. Improvements to public transport including Crewe railway station are also a priority. A focused approach to development makes the delivery of infrastructure more feasible.
- **Natural and Built Heritage** - The focus of safeguarding and enhancing heritage and environmental assets would remain. An increase in Crewe's rate of development would be an opportunity for extending its green infrastructure and improving the quality of the environment. There would be a loss of greenfield sites on the edge of Crewe and the 5 Key Service Centres. There would be very limited impact on the character of small villages.
- **Green Belt** - Green Belt boundaries would not be changed as a result of this option. However this could lead to a requirement to build at higher densities to accommodate the necessary growth or the redevelopment of existing areas in settlements in the Green Belt.

### Risk Assessment

- Need to secure investment in road, rail and public transport infrastructure to support the delivery of growth in Crewe on this scale.
- Development likely to be of sufficient scale to deliver investment in infrastructure to deliver employment sites at Basford, Crewe and Midpoint 18 at Middlewich.
- Need to secure investment in community facilities such as schools, hospitals and health care to serve the increased population
- Lack of growth of population in Macclesfield and Key Service Centres in north of Borough to attract investors into the town centre
- Insufficient housing growth in Macclesfield and Key Service Centres in north of Borough to meet local needs leading to increase in house prices and continuing problems with affordability
- Loss of employment sites in Macclesfield and Key Service Centres in north of Borough to housing

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- Increased levels of commuting into Crewe from longer distances
- Loss of greenfield land on the edge of Crewe and 5 Key Service Centres
- Maintaining accessibility to services in rural areas

## 7 Spatial Options

### Option 2: Growth in Crewe and Macclesfield and Key Service Centres outside of the Green Belt

**7.18** This option would seek to enhance the role of the two Principal Towns in the Borough. It would look to reinforce the role of Crewe as the sub-regional centre for the south of the Borough and Macclesfield for the north. Both towns have had recent economic success and both have the ability to provide a pool of labour, a wider choice of homes and a good level of services. But in order to provide a similar level of growth in Macclesfield as in Crewe, it would be necessary to make changes to the Green Belt, probably in the area to the south west of the town.

**7.19** The Key Service Centres in the southern part of the Borough (Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Nantwich and Sandbach) would also be the focus for growth, also this would be at a lower level than Option 1. This would help to deliver the redevelopment of a number of large vacant sites, but would also require development of greenfield sites on the edge of these towns.

**7.20** There would be limited growth in the Key Service Centres in the northern part of the Borough with no release of sites from the Green Belt.

**7.21** There would be a limited amount of development in and on the edge of the Local Service Centres and small villages where this could be accommodated without releasing the Green Belt.

### Development Distribution

**7.22** The table below indicates the approximate proportion of new dwellings that would be identified for each settlement tier.

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Housing (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	54%	18,900	15,400	12,400
Key Service Centres	36%	10,900	9,450	8,300
Local Service Centres	7%	1,600	1,600	1,600
Smaller Villages	3%	650	550	700

Table 7.6 Housing Development Distribution

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	54%	11,200	7,400	3,800

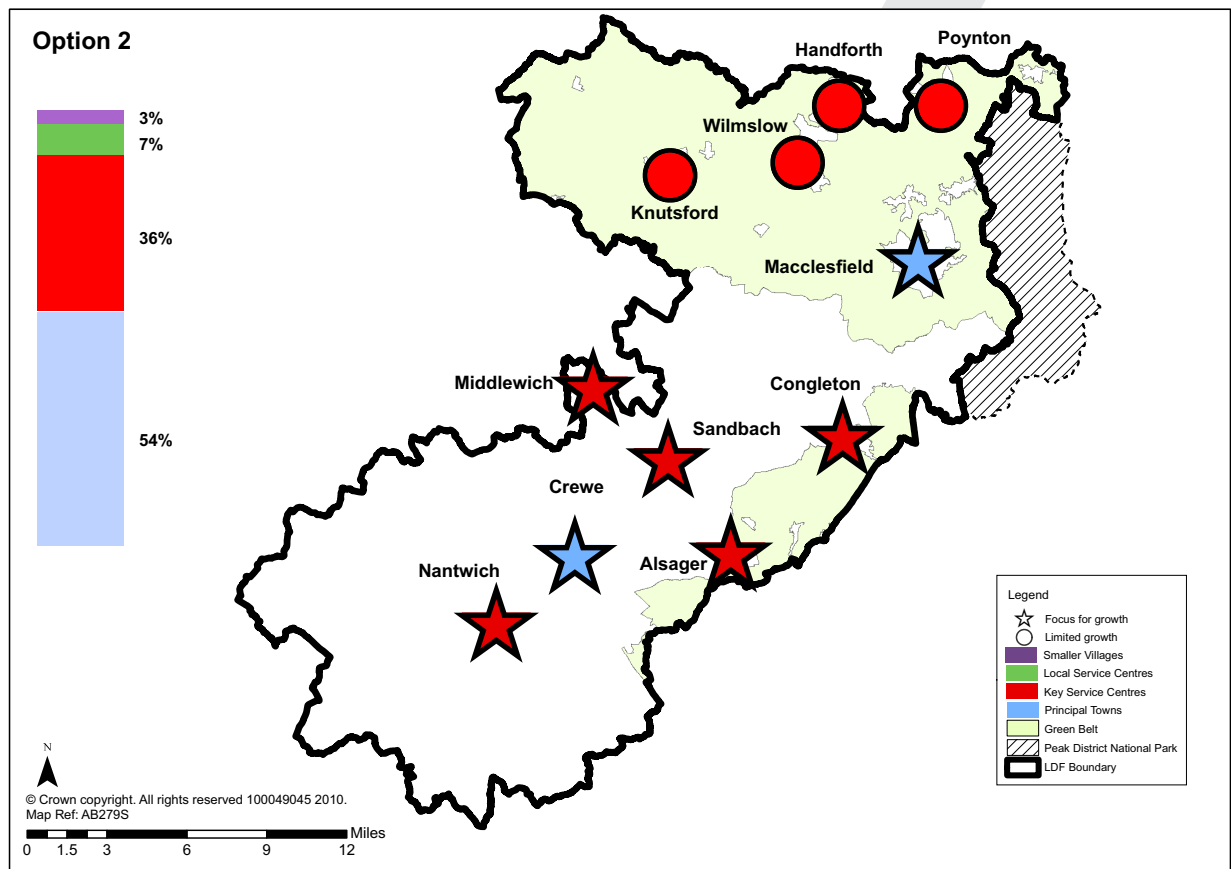
## 7 Spatial Options

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Key Service Centres	36%	6,450	4550	2,500
Local Service Centres	7%	950	800	500
Smaller Villages	3%	400	250	200

**Table 7.7 Job Distribution**



## 7 Spatial Options



**Figure 7.5 Option 2 - Development Proportions and Dispersal for Principal Towns and KSCs**

## 7 Spatial Options

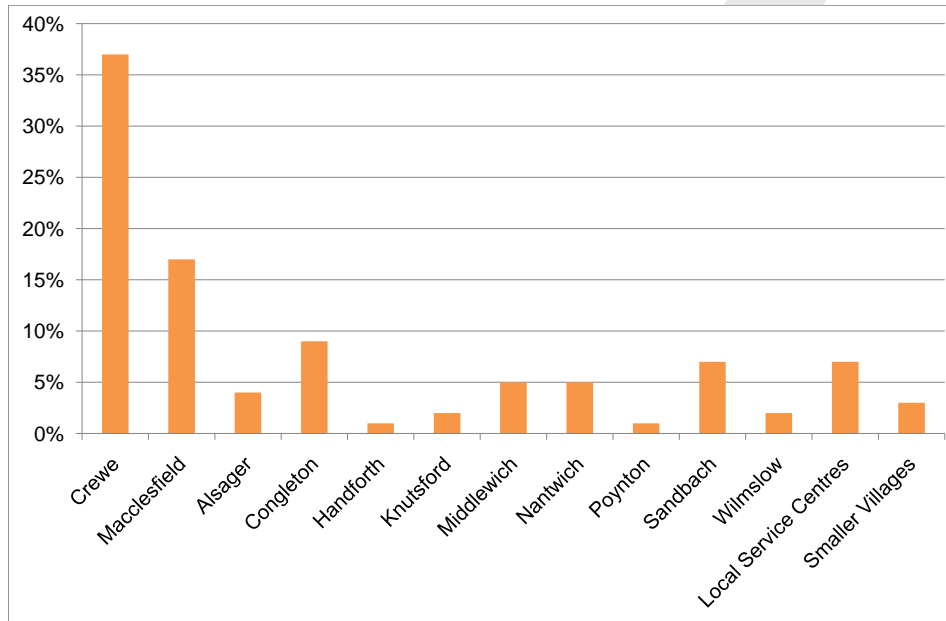


Figure 7.6 Option 2 - Development Proportions by Place

### What will the Option deliver?

**7.23** The potential outcomes of this option are as follows:

- Sustainable Development** – Crewe will become the focal point and driver for new growth in Cheshire East with the aim of delivering new employment areas of regional importance to attract inward investment into the Borough. Macclesfield will become a focus for new growth in the northern part of the Borough, but on a lesser scale than Crewe. Five of the Key Service Centres will be developed to provide a good range of jobs, homes and services but with a lower level of growth than in Option 1. There will be low levels of development in the Key Service Centres in the north of the Borough which may not be sufficient to meet the needs of the local population and the current problems of high house prices and commuting patterns are likely to continue.
- Economy** - This option would deliver the aspirations for economic growth set out in the Crewe Vision and support the delivery of the regionally important employment sites at Basford at Crewe and Midpoint 18 at Middlewich. Growth in Macclesfield would be focused on the South Macclesfield area and in the town centre. Increased housing development will provide a larger local workforce to attract investment in the local economy. A sustainable and diverse employment base would be developed in the 5 Key Service Centres in the south of the Borough. There are limited opportunities for investing in new employment areas in Key Services Centres in the north of the Borough.
- Housing** - New housing would be delivered in Crewe, Macclesfield and the 5 Key Services Centres in the south of the Borough and would deliver a good range to meet local needs in terms of affordability, mix of house types and tenures. Housing development

## 7 Spatial Options

in Macclesfield would help to support the economic development of the town. There would be limited provision of new housing in the Key Services Centres in the north, and this is likely to exacerbate problems of affordability and limited choice in these towns, although development in Macclesfield will meet some of this demand. A limited amount of new housing would be developed in the Local Service Centres and small villages mainly to provide affordable housing for rural areas.

- **Town Centres** - Significant investment in Crewe and Macclesfield would act as a strong incentive to attract investors to revitalise Crewe and Macclesfield town centres. Development in the 5 Key Service Centres in the south of the Borough may help to bring more people into these centres and attract investment. There is uncertainty about whether the limited growth in the Key Service Centres to the north of the Borough would be sufficient to attract investment into these centres.
- **Transport and Accessibility** - Crewe is readily accessible by car and public transport from the towns and villages of the south of the Borough with good links to the motorway network. Macclesfield has a good transport links with the towns in the north of the Borough.
- **Infrastructure** - Significant growth in Crewe would require investment in major new infrastructure, for example the completion of the Crewe Green Link Road and the Barthomley Link Road. There would also be a need to consider improvements to roads to the town centre which are constrained by narrow roads over the railway lines. New transport links between the north of the town and the Basford employment areas could be delivered, and park and ride facilities on the edges of the urban area considered. Improvements to public transport and particularly Crewe railway station are also a priority. A focused approach to development makes accompanying infrastructure delivery more feasible. New development in Macclesfield would require a new road link from arterial roads to serve the development.
- **Natural and Built Heritage** - The focus of safeguarding and enhancing heritage and environmental assets would remain. Development in Crewe and Macclesfield would be an opportunity for extending their green infrastructure and improving the quality of the environment. There would be a loss of greenfield sites on the edge of Crewe, Macclesfield and the 5 Key Service Centres. There would be very limited impact on the character of small villages.
- **Green Belt** - Land in the Green Belt would be released around Macclesfield to deliver this option. There would be a requirement to build at higher densities to accommodate the necessary growth or the redevelopment of existing areas in other settlements in the Green Belt.

### Risk Assessment

- Need to secure investment in road, rail and public transport infrastructure to support the delivery of growth in Crewe.
- Development in Macclesfield likely to be able to support new infrastructure required to serve the development and attract investment to the town centre
- Development likely to be of sufficient scale to deliver investment in infrastructure to deliver employment sites at Basford, Crewe and Midpoint 18 at Middlewich.
- Need to secure investment in community facilities such as schools, hospitals and health care to serve the increased population

## 7 Spatial Options

- Lack of growth of population in Key Service Centres in north of Borough to attract investors into the town centres
- Insufficient housing growth in Key Service Centres in north of Borough to meet local needs leading to increase in house prices and continuing problems with affordability
- Threat of loss of employment sites in Macclesfield and Key Service Centres in north of Borough to housing
- Increased levels of commuting into Crewe from longer distances
- Loss of greenfield land on the edge of Crewe, Macclesfield and 5 Key Service Centres
- Maintaining accessibility to services in rural areas

## 7 Spatial Options

### Option 3: Growth in Crewe and Macclesfield and Accessible Towns

**7.24** This option would focus development in the principal towns and Key and Local Service Centres in locations that have a good standard of accessibility that will enable people to travel to work, shops and services by means other than the private car i.e. public transport, cycling and walking. The following towns have good standards of accessibility by rail and will be the main focus for development in this option:

- Crewe, Alsager, Congleton, Nantwich and Sandbach;
- Macclesfield, Alderley Edge, Handforth, Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow;

**7.25** This option would seek to enhance the role of the two Principal Towns in the Borough. It would look to reinforce the role of Crewe as the sub-regional centre for the south of the Borough and Macclesfield for the north. In addition to good standard of accessibility, both towns have had recent economic success and both have the ability to provide a pool of labour, a wider choice of homes and a good level of services.

**7.26** This strategy will require the release of the Green Belt in Macclesfield and other Key and Local Service Centres, including Alderley Edge, Handforth, Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow.

### Development Distribution

**7.27** The table below indicates the approximate proportion of new dwellings that would be identified for each settlement tier.

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Housing (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	50%	16,300	13,750	11,500
Key Service Centres	38%	13,100	10,800	8,750
Local Service Centres	9%	1,900	1,900	2,000
Smaller Villages	3%	650	550	700

**Table 7.8 Housing Development Distribution**

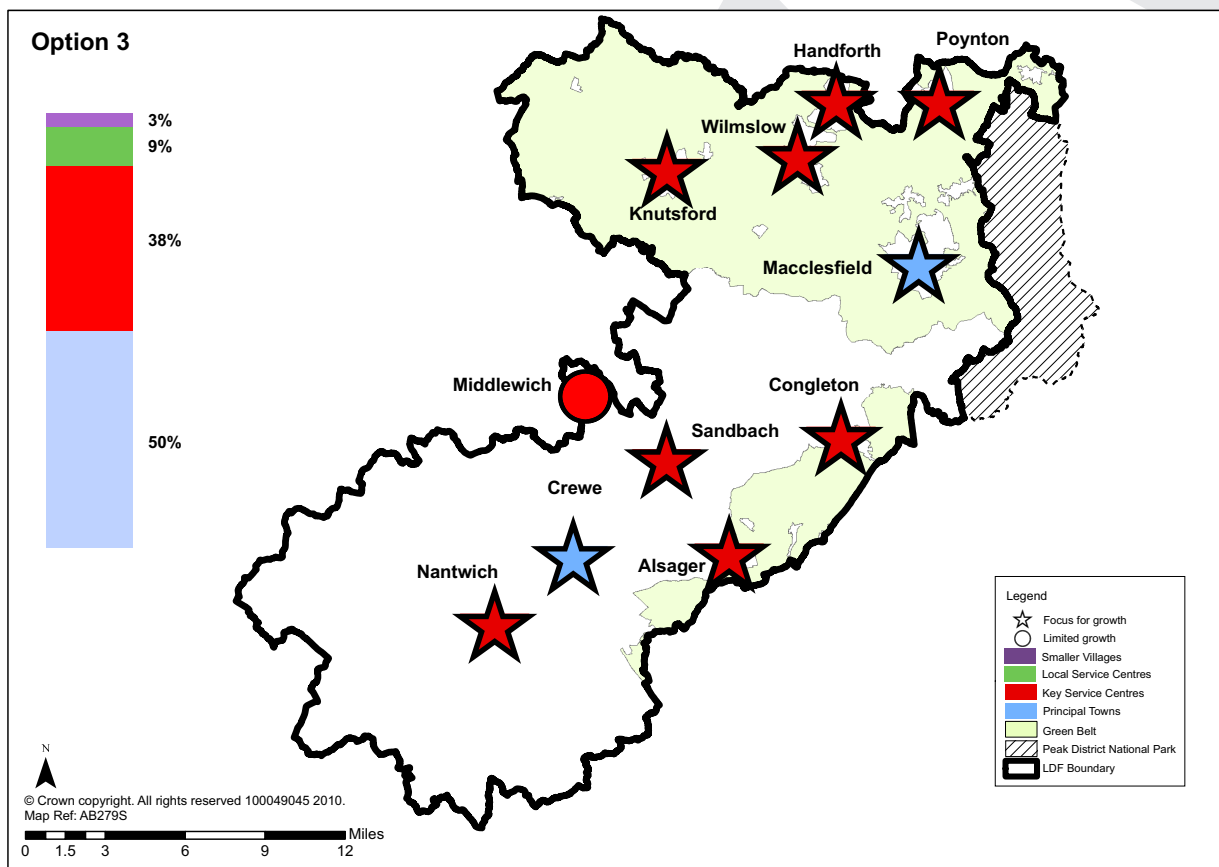
Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	50%	9,700	6,650	3,500
Key Service Centres	38%	7,800	5,200	2,650
Local Service Centres	9%	1,150	900	650



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Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Smaller Villages	3%	400	250	200

**Table 7.9 Job Distribution**



**Figure 7.7 Option 3 - Development Proportions and Dispersal for the Principal Towns and KSCs**

## 7 Spatial Options

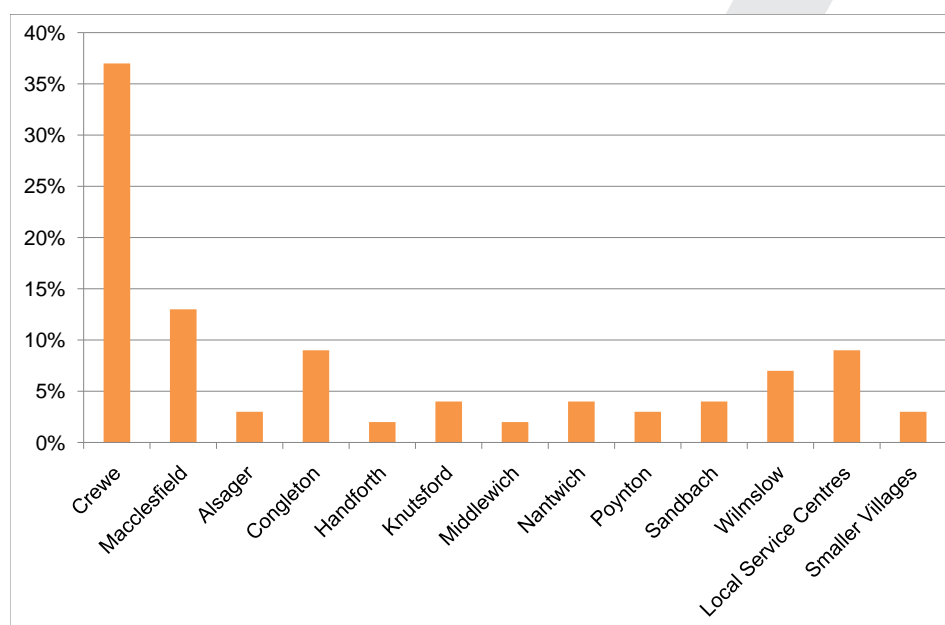


Figure 7.8 Option 3 - Development Proportions by Place

### What will this option deliver?

**7.28** The potential outcomes of this option are as follows:

- Sustainable Development** - Crewe will become the focal point and driver for new growth in Cheshire East with the aim of delivering new employment areas of regional importance to attract inward investment into the Borough. This option will give a greater spread of development to Key and Local Service Centres throughout the Borough, thus helping to provide development in these towns to meet local needs. There would be more emphasis on delivering new housing development at a higher density in town centres and around transport nodes so that more people had easy access to public transport.
- Economic Development** - This option would deliver the aspirations for economic growth set out in the Crewe Vision and support the delivery of the regionally important employment sites at Basford at Crewe. It would not however deliver Midpoint 18 at Middlewich as this is a location dependent on road transport and not accessible by alternative means without significant investment. There would be a significant level of growth in Macclesfield. A sustainable and diverse employment base would be developed in the accessible named Key and Local Service Centres throughout the Borough.
- Housing** - New housing would be delivered in Crewe and Macclesfield and the named Key and Local Service Centres throughout the Borough and would deliver a good range to meet local needs in terms of affordability, mix of house types and tenures. The housing levels would be lower in the Key Service Centres in the south of the Borough than in other options. A limited amount of new housing would be developed in the Local Service Centres and small villages mainly to provide affordable housing for rural areas.

## 7 Spatial Options

- **Town Centres** – Significant investment in Crewe and Macclesfield would act as a strong incentive to attract investors to revitalise their town centres. Development in the Key Service Centres throughout the Borough may help to bring more people into these centres and attract investment.
- **Transport and Accessibility** - All the towns identified have rail services. Concentrating development in these towns coupled with improvements to the public transport infrastructure particularly improvements to the railway passenger facilities and services should lead to a reduction in commuting to work by car. All the Key Service Centres have a good range of shops and community services and facilities.
- **Infrastructure** - In addition to the investment in infrastructure required to support the delivery of growth in Crewe, this option would require investment in passenger facilities at the railway stations and improvement to the frequency of services.
- **Natural and Built Heritage** - The focus of safeguarding and enhancing heritage and environmental assets would remain. An increase in Crewe's rate of development would be an opportunity for extending its green infrastructure and improving the quality of the environment. There would be a loss of greenfield sites on the edge of Crewe, Macclesfield and the named Key and Local Service Centres. There would be very limited impact on the character of small villages.
- **Green Belt** - This option will result in changes to the Green Belt in a number of locations including Macclesfield, Alderley Edge, Handforth, Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow.

### Risk Assessment

- Need to secure investment in road, rail and public transport infrastructure to support the delivery of growth in Crewe
- Investment in public transport, particularly rail, is required to deliver increased levels of commuting by public transport, otherwise there is the risk of increased levels of travel by car and increased congestion on roads
- Does not provide the development needed to deliver the infrastructure to deliver Midpoint 18 at Middlewich
- Need to secure investment in community facilities such as schools, hospitals and health care to serve the increased population
- Sufficient housing growth in Crewe and Macclesfield and Key Service Centres throughout the Borough to meet local needs and to provide a good range and mix of housing, including affordable housing
- Sufficient housing development in Local Service Centres throughout the Borough to meet local affordable needs
- Loss of greenfield land on the edge of Crewe, Macclesfield and the named Key and Local Service Centres
- Need to release land from the Green Belt in a number of locations
- Maintaining accessibility to services in rural areas

## 7 Spatial Options

### Variant: Rural Dispersal

**7.29** All three options propose low levels of growth in the Local Service Centres and small villages to support the strategy for sustainable development which focuses development towards those settlements with a good range of services and facilities. The level of growth proposed in the three options would deliver sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs of the rural areas. However, the baseline position shows that up to 30% of the population of the Borough currently reside in these small communities and there is evidence that there is a demand for more market housing to meet the needs of local communities. To enable consideration to be undertaken to a more dispersed pattern of development, a variant is proposed that can be applied to any of the three options. This variant considers the impact of distributing higher levels of development to rural communities in Local Service Centres and small villages.

**7.30** Under this variant there would be a reduced level of growth in Crewe and Macclesfield and the Key Service Centres and this development would be dispersed to all or most of the Local Service Centres and a number of small villages. This variant would require the development of a large number of small sites; these may be sites selected by the local community as envisaged by the Coalition Government proposal. Careful controls would be required on the development of these sites to ensure that they deliver housing to meet local needs, for example through a Local Community Trust or through planning conditions or legal agreement. Otherwise many of the sites are likely to be developed for high value executive housing.

**7.31** At this stage it is difficult to quantify the amount of development that could be delivered through this variant. If controls over the occupiers of the dwellings were not in place or proved to be ineffective, it is likely that there would be a high level of demand for the development of new housing. Table 7.10 below shows the levels of growth in Local Service Centres and villages that could occur if 30% of the housing requirement were distributed to rural communities.

**7.32** It is uncertain whether this variant will deliver an increased number of jobs in rural communities. Provided that high speed broad band infrastructure is delivered, there would be more scope for businesses to be run from the home or community enterprise hubs. Otherwise, the variant is likely to give rise to increased journeys to work by car on minor rural roads.

**7.33** A more dispersed pattern of growth in housing will result in an increased demand for public services to be delivered to rural areas giving rise to increased costs in school transport, health and social care, for example. The cost of providing utility services such as water, sewerage and telephones is usually greater in rural areas. This variant may lead to support to existing services in rural areas, such as local shops and community organisations however, it may result in a higher proportion of the future population of the Borough having to travel further to access services such as shops, schools, health care and sports and leisure facilities. A more dispersed pattern of growth will be more dependent on the car for transport and mean that it is less feasible to develop public transport options.

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**7.34** This variant would require the release of a large number of small sites on the edge of Local Service Centres and small villages. Sites will have to be carefully selected to ensure that their development did not impact on the landscape setting of the village or any sites of nature conservation or historic importance.

**7.35** There may be a small number of sites available within settlements in the Green Belt, however, if this variant were to be applied throughout Cheshire East there may be demand to release a considerable number of sites from the Green Belt.

### Development Distribution

**7.36** The table below indicates the approximate proportion of new dwellings that would be identified for each settlement tier.

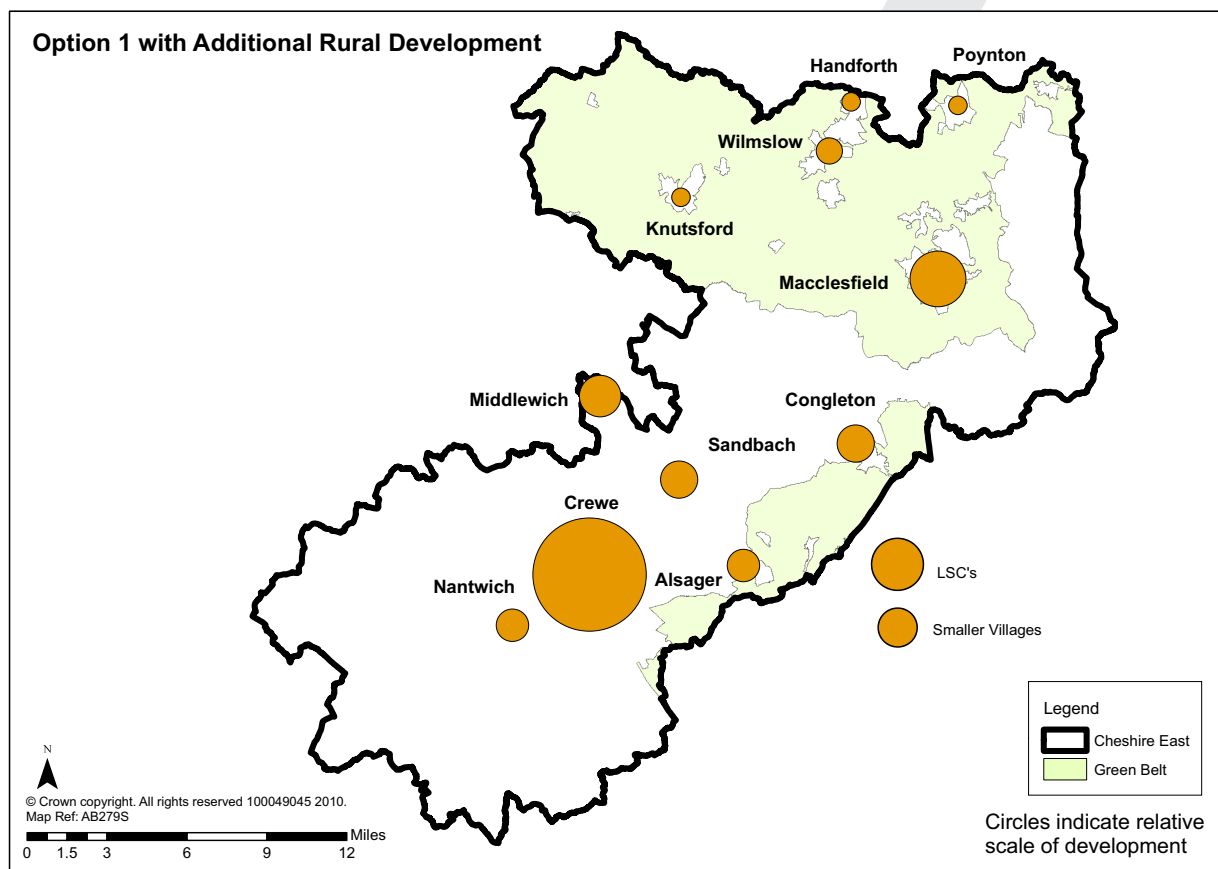
Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Housing (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	46%	13,750	12,400	10,600
Key Service Centres	24%	7,350	6,200	5,500
Local Service Centres	17%	5,750	4,850	3,900
Smaller Villages	13%	5,100	3,500	3,000

**Table 7.10 Housing Development Distribution**

Settlement Hierarchy	Proportion of Development	Jobs (20 Years)		
		High	Medium	Low
Principal Towns	46%	8,150	6,000	3,200
Key Service Centres	24%	4,350	3,000	1,700
Local Service Centres	17%	3,400	2,350	1,200
Smaller Villages	13%	3,050	1,700	900

**Table 7.11 Job Distribution**

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**Figure 7.9 Option 1 with Rural Variant - Development Proportions and Dispersal for the Principal Towns and KSCs (MAP TO BE UPDATED)**



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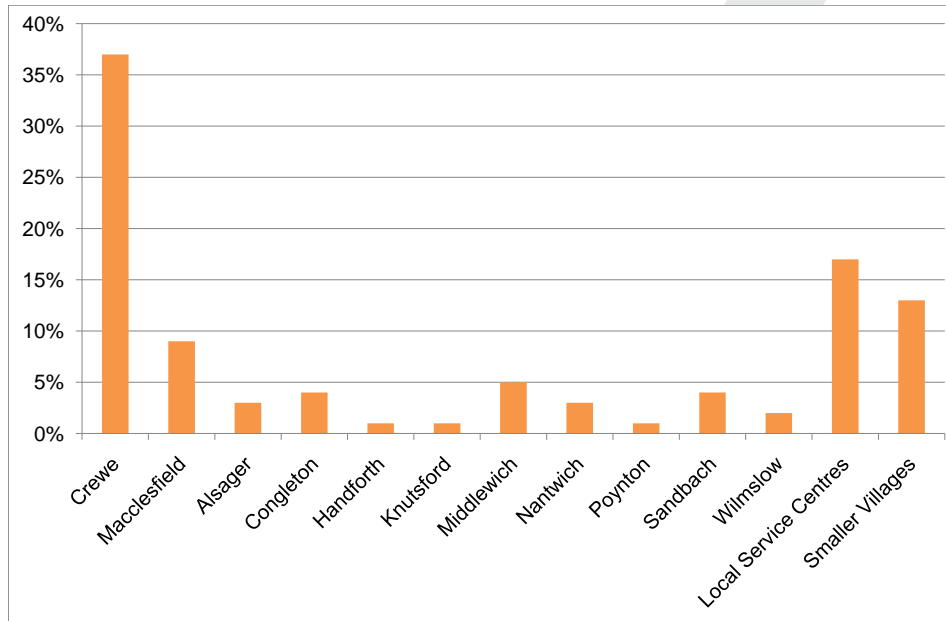


Figure 7.10 Option 1 with Rural Variant - Development Proportions by Place

### What will the variant deliver?

**7.37** The potential outcomes of this option are as follows:

- **Sustainable Development** – This variant would result in a more dispersed pattern of development with potentially a considerable increase in the population of the Borough living in small rural communities with few services.
- **Economy** – There is potential for the rural economy to expand with rural enterprise hubs and home working. However, there is no certainty that a dispersed pattern of development would deliver the same levels of economic growth that could be achieved by growth focused in the main towns.
- **Town Centres** – This variant would result in a lower level of development in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres. Depending on the amount of development that is diverted to rural areas, it may be that the scale of investment in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres may not be sufficient to secure the required investment in their town centres.
- **Housing** – This variant would provide for a more dispersed pattern of housing development with the greatest scope for providing affordable housing and market housing in rural areas to meet local needs. However careful controls would be required otherwise this variant would result in development of high priced executive housing. If very high levels of housing were delivered under this variant, it may result in the housing needs of residents of Key Service Centres being provided in Local Service Centres and villages.
- **Transport and Accessibility** - This option may result in more commuting as people travel to major settlements for work. It is likely to result in more car journeys as rural

## 7 Spatial Options

areas are less well served by public transport and there are limited opportunities for journeys by foot or by bicycle. More journeys will involve travel on minor rural roads.

- **Infrastructure** – More people living and working in rural communities may put pressure on rural infrastructure such as water supplies and sewage treatment. This variant may result in insufficient development in Principal Towns and Key Service Centres needed to deliver major infrastructure improvements to the road network or public transport improvements. Major investment would be required to provide high speed broadband to provide attractive working conditions in rural areas.
- **Natural and Built Heritage** – Great care would be needed in delivering this variant to ensure that sites did not impact on the landscape setting or historic character of many small villages.
- **Green Belt** - This variant would result in the release of a number of sites on the edge of settlements in the Green Belt.

### Risk Assessment

- Demand for high value executive housing in rural locations may lead to development not meeting the housing needs of local communities without careful controls
- Reduced levels of accessibility to public services and increased public sector costs eg. for school travel and health care
- Increased investment needs in utility services in rural communities
- No certainty that this variant will deliver growth in employment and economic development in rural areas. It could result in the diversion of employment from other areas.
- Employment in rural areas dependent on securing high speed broadband service in these areas.
- No certainty that this variant will support the retention of shops and services in rural communities
- Increase in travel to work, schools, shops and leisure activities by car using minor rural roads.
- Will not support increase accessibility by means of transport other than the car
- Likely to be differing views in communities to this variant with difficulties in reaching consensus in the selection of suitable sites
- May reduce the amount of development available in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres and reduce the level of investment in town centres and employment areas

## 7 Spatial Options

### Comparison of Spatial Options

**7.38** To assist with the understanding of the three options, Figure 7.11 below sets out the proportion of development that would take place in each settlement tier under the three options, the baseline position and the variant for rural dispersal. Figure 7.12 shows the implications of each option for each town and the Local Service Centres.

# 7 Spatial Options

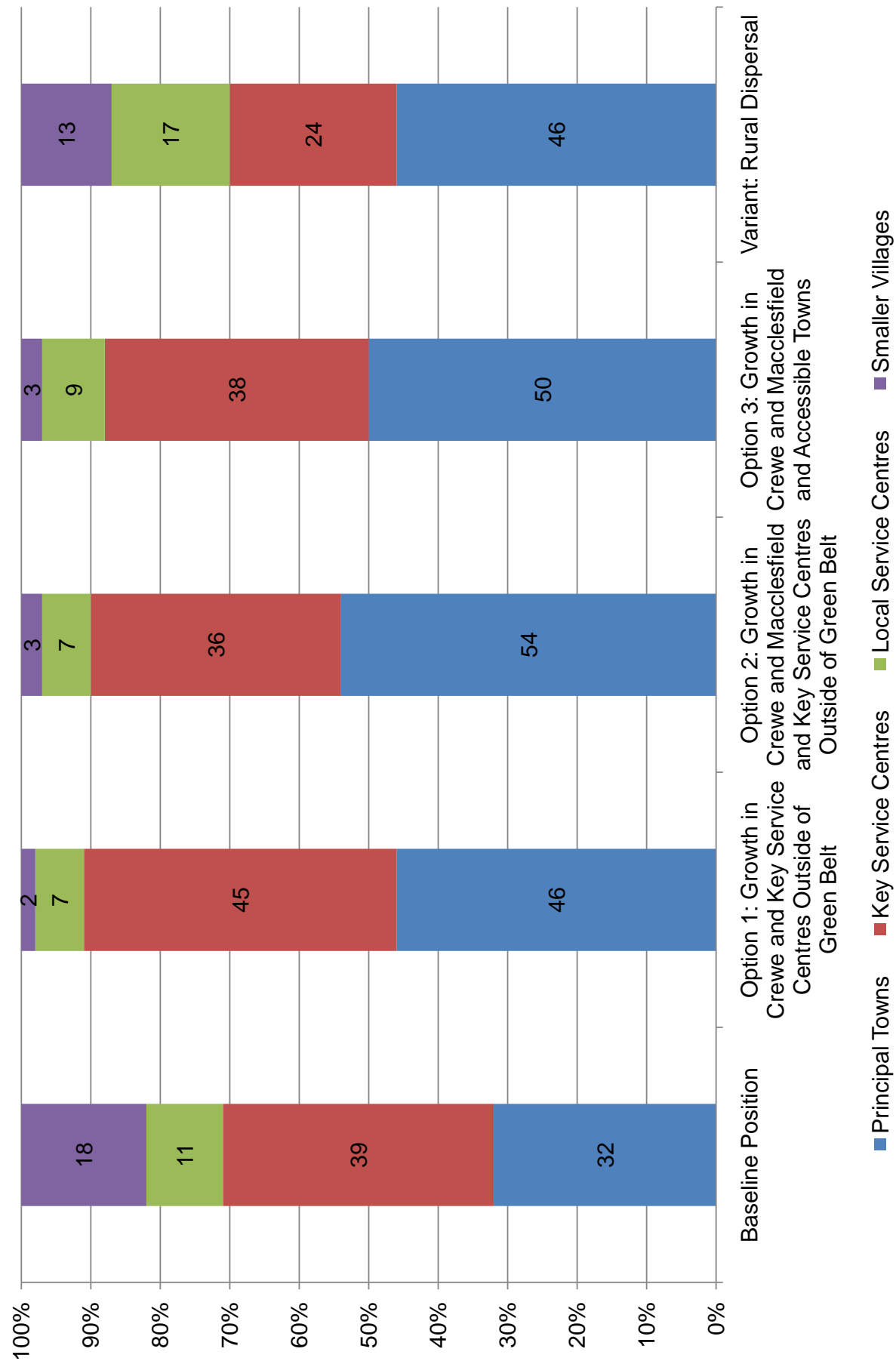


Figure 7.11 Implications for Towns and Villages by Spatial Option

# 7 Spatial Options

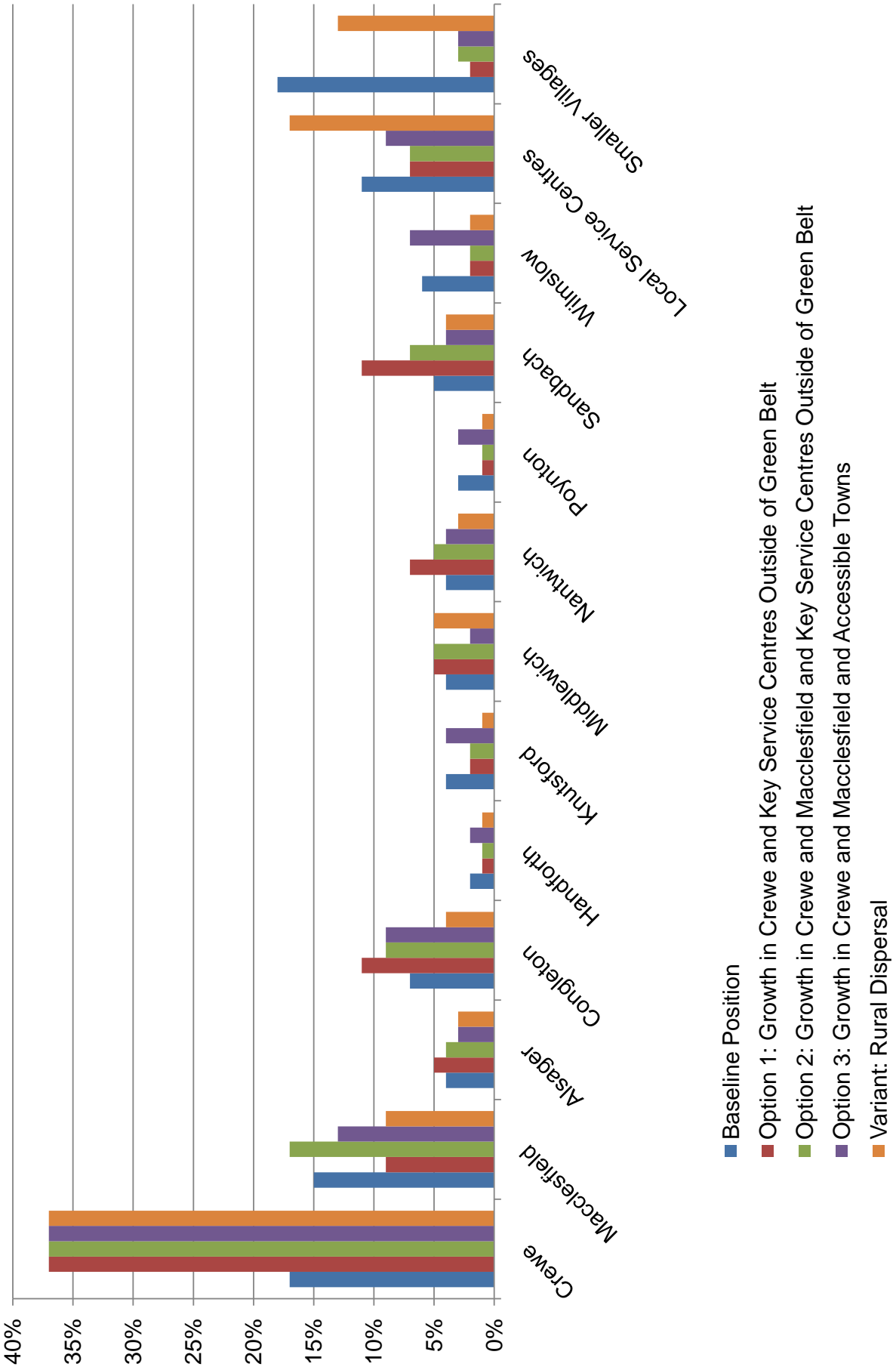


Figure 7.12 Implications for Spatial Options by Place

## 7 Spatial Options

### Question 9

Which of the three spatial options do you prefer? 1 / 2 / 3

### Question 10

Please give your reasons

### Question 11

Do you agree that a higher level of development should be dispersed to Local Service Centres and villages as proposed in the Variant Option? Yes / No

### Question 12

Please give your reasons



## Abbreviations

CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
KSC	Key Service Centre
LDF	Local Development Framework
LSC	Local Service Centre
NHPAU	National Housing and Planning Advice Unit
NPHP	National Population and Household Projections
ONS	Office for National Statistics
REFP	Regional Economic Forecasting Panel
RS2010	Regional Strategy
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategy
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SBI	Site of Biological Importance
SCS	Sustainable Community Strategy
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SHLAA	Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SM	Scheduled Monument
SPA	Special Protection Area (for birds)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

## Glossary

### Glossary

TO BE COMPLETED	